Sri Ramanuja Ashtottara Shatanamavalli

Meaning of each Holy Name with Pastime

(Holy Name 1 - Holy Name 108)

Composed by Sri Vaduga Nambi (Sri Andhra Purna), the personal servant of Sri Ramanujacharya

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Holy Name 1: Ramanuja

Mantra: Om Raamanujaa Namah

Meaning – One who is the younger brother of Sri Rama, Sri Lakshmana

Pastime – Thirumalai Nambi, who is a disciple of Alavandar (Sri Yamunacharya) is an uncle and Guru of Sri Ramanuja. Nambi's sister is married to Ramanuja's father, Sri Keshava Somayaji. When Thirumalai Nambi heard that, his sister, Kanthimathi, had given birth to a baby boy, he went to see the child and when he saw the beautiful lotus-like eyes of a newly-born lad, immediately he understood that the child was not an ordinary personality or mortal, and child had the appearance of Mahapurusha, great personality, further with his divine intervention he understood that the child is none-other than Lakshmana, who was the younger brother of Lord Rama in Treta-yuga. Understanding this aspect, Thirumalai Nambi named the young lad "Illaya Azhwar (One who is the younger brother of Lord Rama)", which can be addressed as "Ramanuja" in Sanskrit. Rama is Lord Sri Rama of Ayodhya. (Raamasya anujah = Raamaanujah) Anuja is 'one who is born subsequently' (i.e., brother). So, Ramanuja means Lord Rama's younger brother. That is Sri Lakshmana. That's why, the great acharya is known as "Ramanuja – One who is the younger brother of Sri Rama, Sri Lakshmana."

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Holy Name 2: Pushkaraakshah

Mantra: Om Pushkaraakshaaya Namah

Meaning - One who has eyes like a Lotus, or One whose glances are nourishing

Pastime – Whenever Sri Ramanuja goes to have the darshan of Lord Ranganatha, he will fully enjoy the beautiful form of Lord Ranganatha. The whole time, Vaduga Nambi will be fully enjoying the beautiful form of Sri Ramanuja. Sri Ramanuja notices that and asks Vaduga Nambi to look at the beautiful eyes of Lord Ranganatha, who is known as Pushkaraakshah (One who has lotus eyes like a Lotus). For which, Vaduga Nambi replies, "You see the beauty of your Lord's (Ranganatha's) lotus eyes, I will see the beauty of my Lord's (Ramanuja's) lotus

eyes." Further, Vaduga Nambi says by quoting Thiruppanazhwar's words "*en amudhinai kanda kangal marronrinai kanave*" meaning "My eyes which saw the beautiful form of Sri Ramanuja will not see anything else" in this case. Sri Ramanuja was very pleased with his Acharya Nishta (Dedication and Devotion at the lotus feet of Acharya) and blessed him fully.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Pushkaraakshah - One who has eyes like a Lotus, or One whose glances are nourishing."

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Holy Name 3: Yatheendrah

Mantra: Om Yatheendraya Namah

Meaning – One who is the king or best of the saints or ascetics

Pastime – After Sri Ramanuja accepts Sannyasa order from Lord Varadaraja and becomes the head of the Sri Vaishnava clan in Sri Rangam. In Kanchipuram, Yadava Prakasha, who was previously a Guru of Sri Ramanuja, was falling sick again and again, because of his offence at the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja. The guilt of having made attempts on Ramanuja's life and ill-treating Ramanuja started to haunt him. He became emaciated. Yadava Prakasha's mother knew about everything that had transpired between him and Ramanuja. Being captivated by Ramanuja's devotion, learning, calmness, and physical beauty when she had first seen Ramanuja, in Lord Varadaraja's temple, Yadava Prakasha's mother had prayed to the Lord requesting Him to make her son a disciple of a noble soul like Ramanuja. Yadava Prakasha's mother recollected her desire and asked Yadava Prakasha to seek Ramanuja's forgiveness and become his disciple. Yadava Prakasha, who was also a prominent Sannyasi in the Advaita clan and also had huge followers, could not easily accept his mother's advice and he started pondering over it. On his way to the temple, Yadava Prakasha met Kanchipurna and said, "Sir, people tell that you directly speak to the Lord and intervene on behalf of those who are in trouble. My mind has become restless and I am unable to find a specific reason for that. Moreover, some doubts have been bothering me for some time. Could you please ask the Lord to tell me what is good for me?"

Kanchipurna asked him to wait for a day to get answers to his questions. The next day Kanchipurna told Yadava Prakasha that the Lord had asked him to accept Ramanuja as his guru. Everyone in Kanchipuram trusted Kanchipurna as everything that he had told at the behest of the Lord had come true and, therefore, Yadava Prakasha did not have any reason to ignore his advice. After thinking for a while, Yadava Prakasha decided to go to Ramanuja and discuss scriptures to overcome the doubts that were lingering in his mind before accepting Ramanuja as his guru.

An effulgent-looking divine person had appeared in Yadava Prakasha's dream and asked him to seek refuge in Ramanuja the night before Kanchipurna asked Yadava Prakasha to become a disciple of Ramanuja. This had a lot of impact on Yadava Prakasha's mind and he decided to go to Ramanuja immediately. He shed his ego and went to Ramanuja's monastery. Ramanuja was discussing the glories of the Lord with Dasarathi and Kuresha when Yadava Prakasha reached his monastery. Ramanuja got up from his seat and respectfully offered a seat to Yadava Prakasha, who was once his preceptor. Yadava Prakasha was captivated by the effulgence on Ramanuja's face and his humility.

After discussing various passages from the scriptures to get his doubts clarified, Yadava Prakasha said, "Son, I am impressed with your knowledge of the scriptures. You have started applying urdhvapundram on your forehead to indicate that you have opted to worship Saguna Brahman (i.e. worshipping the Supreme Lord as the one who is endowed with auspicious qualities. Being a Mayavadi, Yadava Prakasha used to believe that the Supreme Lord is devoid of all qualities). Could you please tell me if it has been sanctioned by the scriptures?"

Ramanuja said, "Sir, my disciple Kuresha remembers all the scriptures by heart as he is blessed with a great memory. He will enlighten you about the passages that not only recommend the worship of Saguna Brahman but also glorify those who have opted to worship Saguna Brahman."

Yadava Prakasha looked at Kuresha who humbly said, "Sir, the sruthis are considered to be the most authoritative among the scriptures. Therefore, I will quote from the scriptures to convince you that worshipping Saguna Brahman is recommended in the scriptures. The Atharva Veda says he who applies urdhvapundra, which resembles the footmark of Lord Hari, becomes righteous and very dear to the Supreme Lord and eventually gets liberated."

Kuresha quoted various passages from Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda, Mundako Upanishad, Svetasvatara Upanishad, Taittiriya Upanishad, Chandogya Upanishad and many other authoritative scriptures that not only describe the Supreme Lord as the storehouse of all auspicious qualities but also recommend His worship as Saguna Brahman.

Quoting from Rig Veda, Kuresha said, "Only the best among men apply the marks of urdhvapundram and the marks of discus and conch on their shoulders. By worshipping the Supreme Lord they easily cross the ocean of samsara and attain liberation."

Yadava Prakasha realized the greatness of worshipping Saguna Brahman and tears started to trickle down his cheeks. He understood why his mother, Kanchipurna, and the divine being in his dream had asked him to seek refuge in Ramanuja. He got up from his seat and fell at Ramanuja's feet. He tightly clasped Ramanuja's feet and despite Ramanuja's efforts to wriggle his feet out,

Yadava Prakasha did not leave them. Yadava Prakasha said, “Sir, I have repeatedly offended you without knowing your greatness. Please forgive me; I will not leave your lotus feet till you agree to accept me as your disciple.”

Ramanuja was moved by the humility of Yadava Prakasha and could not bear to see him, a great scholar who was once his preceptor, crying like a small child. Ramanuja lifted, embraced him and agreed to accept him as a disciple. Yadava Prakasha immediately went to his mother to seek her permission to accept the renounced order of life. With his mother’s permission and Ramanuja’s grace, Yadava Prakasha was initiated into the Vaishnava fold by administering the fivefold sacraments – fire sacrifice, applying of urdhvapundram on twelve different parts of the body, branding the sacred marks of conch and discus on one’s shoulders, receiving the sacred mantras from one’s guru and getting an initiated name to show one’s servitude to the Supreme Lord. Yadava Prakasha accepted the renounced order of life on the same day and came to be known as Govinda Jeeyar.

Yadava Prakasha’s pride, which was an outcome of his erudition and ability to interpret the scripture, vanished and he transformed into an earnest devotee very soon. He started to repent for having wasted his youth in needless wrangling and focused on contemplating the glories of the Supreme Lord. At the behest of his guru, Ramanuja, Yadava Prakasha compiled a treatise to explain the duties of a Yati (one who has accepted the renounced order of life), called Yatidharma Sammuchchaya and placed it before the lotus feet of his guru. Yadava Prakasha attained the spiritual realm at the age of eighty years.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Yatheendrah – One who is the king or best of the saints or ascetics (Yatis),” in this case, Yadava Prakasha, who was a great ascetic and had hundreds of followers or disciples, even Sri Ramanuja was his disciple before accepting Sannyasa order. That ascetic (Yati) left everything and surrendered at the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja, it is like Guru surrendering to Disciple, which was completely unheard of, still, this special incident shows, how Sri Ramanuja is the King among all ascetics (Yatis).

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Holy Name 4: Karunaakarah

Mantra: Om Karunaakaraaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the storehouse of kindness or compassion

Pastime – At Sri Rangam, Sri Ramanuja had many varying and important duties to perform as assigned by Lord Ranganatha. And, inspecting the clothes of the Lord sent for a wash was one of such duties. Sri Ramanuja, among so many varied duties at the temple, routinely inspected the washed clothes of the Lord Ranganatha sent for a wash every day.

One day, Sri Ramanuja saw the clothes of the Lord had been washed exceedingly well and they looked as if they were new. Sri Ramanuja was very happy with the quality of service provided by the washer-man. He got excited so much that Sri Ramanuja went straight to the washer-man. Sri Ramanuja took the washer-man by his hand and led him to Lord Ranganatha. For Sri Ramanuja, there were no castes or other barriers.

He treated all believers in Sriman Narayanan as equals. That was one of the reasons Sri Ramanuja was very popular among all saints. Sri Ramanuja after reaching Lord Ranganatha's shrine addressed Lord Ranganatha "Lord! You just look at these washed clothes of Yours; they look as if they are new. This great devotee of Yours' has done a wonderful job. Therefore, you must reward him." Lord Ranganatha, in reply, asked Sri Ramanuja "What is your recommendation?"

Sri Ramanuja was quick to think and consolidate. Sri Ramanuja said, in reply, to the Lord "Swami, assure him of a seat in Your transcendental abode for discharging his duty of washing the clothes so sincerely and with love and affection". Sri Ramanuja continued further.

Sri Ramanuja, in continuation, said that this washer man's forefathers had sinned, when you have descended has Lord Krishna, without any deliberate intention of committing it. So, you good Lord, please condone that sin committed by his forefathers also. What a strange request made by Sri Ramanuja. It was not that strange because for Lord Narayana the period is beyond significance. Sri Ramanuja was fully aware that Lord Narayana was beyond Time.

When Lord Krishna appeared on this earthly planet, Lord Krishna and his elder brother Lord Balarama had gone over to the city of Mathura, at the invitation of their maternal uncle, Kamsa. Lord Krishna suggested that they should put on the best clothes since they were in a city. Since they had come from a village where they wore ordinary clothes befitting the village and their duties, they wanted to have new clothes. What was their duty in their village? Their duty was to look after the cows. And that called for ordinary clothes. Since they had to come to a city and that too at the invitation of their uncle, they wanted to have the best attire. Even though the intention of the uncle to extend an invitation was different, and that was to kill Lord Krishna, Lord Krishna wanted to put on the best clothes to look princely in appearance. So, the brothers approached the best washerman in the kingdom of Mathura and called for the best clothes. Naturally, it has to be one of the King's. The washer-man not only refused to part with the clothes, being afraid of the King but shied them away by making fun of them for their rustic appearance. And that was the sin inadvertently committed by the washerman against Lord Krishna and Lord Krishna was so much angry with the Washerman that he cut the head of the washerman at the spot. This is known to Sri Ramanuja and at the appropriate time, he requested Lord Ranganatha, who is Lord Krishna. Lord Ranganatha smiled, when he heard the recommendation of Sri Ramanuja, but saw his large-heartedness or compassion or kindness in

recommending so and replied to Sri Ramanuja “We accept all your recommendations.”

That meant that Lord Ranganatha had not only rewarded the washer-man for the good job done now but had also pardoned the wrongs of the forefathers by the that washerman, who was suffering in the hellish region was given the chance to get out from this material entanglement, on the recommendation of Sri Ramanuja, for that good act now performed by this washer-man. And, that made everyone happy. Thereafter, everyone decided to be more devoted to their service. They wanted to try and attain the pardon of any inadvertently committed sins and also seek salvation not only for themselves but possible for their ancestors!

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Karunaakarah – One who is the storehouse of kindness or compassion.”

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Holy Name 5: Kaanthimathyaatmajah

Mantra: Om Kaanthimathyaatmajaaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the son of Mother Kanthimathi

Pastime – Sri Shailapurna, who is a disciple of Sri Yamunacharya, had two sisters named Sridevi and Bhumidevi. Bhumidevi, who is also known as Kanthimathi, was married to a devotee known as Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji, who is a resident of Sriperambadhur and used to be the priest of Lord Keshava temple at Sriperambadhur and regularly used to perform the Yajnas (Sacrifices) known as Soma Yajna. Both were leading a happy life in the service of Lord Vishnu and over time, for the progeny both visited the abode of Lord Parthasarathi at Thiruvallikeni and prayed to him for divine progeny for the upliftment of Dharma. By the mercy and prediction of Lord Parthasarathi, Bhumidevi (Kanthimathi), the wife of Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji, very soon delivered a boy on a Thursday, which was the fifth day of the waxing moon when Ardra asterism was prevailing in the Chittirai month of Pingala year, which is believed to be the 4118th year of Kali-yuga (1071 A.D). The baby was very attractive and glowing with spiritual radiance. Bhumidevi’s (Kanthimathi’s) sister Sridevi had also delivered a boy around the same time. Sridevi came along with her husband to see the baby. Sri Shailapurna also came to see his nephews from Tirumala Hills. Both Bhumidevi (Kanthimathi) and Sridevi were very pleased to see their brother after a long time. On seeing Bhumidevi’s (Kanthimathi’s) son Sri Shailapurna became very happy as many auspicious signs on the child’s body indicated that he was not an ordinary child. Sri Shailapurna was reminded of the ten hymns from Thirvaymozhi in which saint Nammalwar prophesies the advent of a great Acharya.

The fact that the child's horoscope and birth star matched that of Lord Rama's brother, Lakshmana, as described by Sage Valmiki in Ramayana, made the entire family happy. Srishailapurna named Bhumidevi's son Ramanuja, after Lakshmana, and Sridevi's son as Govinda. Srishaila returned to Sri Rangam after the naming ceremony to serve his spiritual master, Yamunacharya, and from there to Tirumala to serve Lord Govinda.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Kaanthimathyaatmajah – One who is the son of Mother Kanthimathi."

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Holy Name 6: Sreeman

Mantra: Om Sreemathe Namah

Meaning – One who is the possessor of Shree (Both Material and Spiritual wealth)

Pastime – In Thirumala, Sri Ramanuja along with Ananthalvan, worshipped at the shrine of Sri Lakshmi Varahadeva and then entered the temple of Thiruvenkatamudaiyan. He prostrated at the Bali-peetam, the Dvajastambham, and the Puspa-mandapam and also worshipped the Ananada-nilaya-vimana. He entered the sanctum sanctorum. He worshipped the Lord from the holy feet to kiritam (Padadi Kesa). The Lord was bedecked with all types of beautiful jewels of Navaratna, flowers, Pitambara, and sandal paste The Lord appeared to him as Indranila Ratna Kalpaka Vriksha in full blossom on the top of the Hills. He was the consort of Alarmelmangai, His Consort always adorning his chest Ramanuja was reminded of the final decade of Nammalvar's Thiruvaymoli, sixth centum beginning with the famous hymn "Ulakamunda Peruvaya - the Lord who swallowed the earth". It was after this decade that Nammalwar chose to address the Lord of the seven Hills as "Alarmelmangayurai Marba, in other words, the Lord whose chest is adorned by Mahalakshmi." Ramanuja and his disciple recited these ten holy verses of Nammalwar at the sanctum sanctorum. After receiving Prasada, they came out of the temple. At the request of Periya Thirumalai Nambi, Ramanuja stayed on the Hills for three days worshipping at the shrine all the time. during those three days, the worship of the Lord of the Seven Hills was his food. On the third day, Ramanuja went to the shrine for worship along with Periya Thirumalai Nambi. After reciting the hymns of Periyalvar's Thiruppallandu as Mangalasasanam, he was about to take leave of the Lord. He was honoured with His highly fragrant Sri Sathakopa, Thirtha, and Prasadam, further, the Lord blessed Ramanuja stating, "My dear Ramanuja at the southern house in Sri Rangam we have already bestowed on you and your followers the wealth of this world and the wealth of Vaikunta (Spiritual world). There is nothing more that we can bestow on you now." Hearing the majestic voice of the Lord, Sri Ramanuja acknowledged that was the highest benediction that he could ever have. Ramanuja and Periya Thirumalai Nambi came down from the Hills and reached

Tirupathi where they stayed for one year. He learned Sri Ramayana from Periya Thirumalai Nambi during his stay at Tirupathi.

From this incident and especially from the words of Lord Srinivasa, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Sreeman – One who is the possessor of Shree (Both Material and Spiritual wealth).”

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Holy Name 7: Leelamaanusha-vigrahah

Mantra: Om Leelamaanusha-vigrahaaya Namah

Meaning – One who has assumed Human form as part of his pastime

Pastime – Adisesha, the serpent bed of Lord Narayana, is the constant companion, servant and expansion of Supreme Lord Narayana. Wherever the Lord is present, Adisesha expands himself and does his services like when the Lord sits, Adisesha becomes a seat, when the Lord walks, Adisesha becomes Paduka (Slippers), when the Lord sleeps, Adisesha becomes a bed, etc… Also, whenever Lord Narayana appears as an incarnation in the material world, Adisesha also expands himself and appears to perform service to his Lordship. When the Supreme Lord appeared as Lord Rama, Adisesha appeared as his brother Lakshmana. When the Supreme Lord appeared as Lord Krishna, Adisesha appeared as his brother Balarama. Similarly, When the Lord appeared as Lord Gauranga, Adisesha appeared as his brother Vishvarupa and also as Nityananda Prabhu.

Once in the abode of the Lord, Lord Narayana commands Adisesha, “In Kali-yuga people are fallen and misled by various philosophies. Further, due to the propagation of Shankara’s Mayavada philosophy, the devotional service to himself (Lord Narayana) was not propagated. So, for the upliftment of fallen civilization, you need to appear on the earth and spread Vaishnavism by propagating devotional service to me (Lord Narayana) by writing various literatures and commentary on Vedanta Sutra.” Adisesha accepted the order of Lord Narayana and appeared on the earth as the son of Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji and Kanthimathi stayed on this earth for 120 earthly years and established the principles of devotional service to Lord Narayana far and wide. Also wrote several literatures and commented on Vedanta Sutra.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Leelamaanusha-vigrahah – One who has assumed Human form as part of his pastime,” not only once, but several times for the service of Lord Narayana.

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Holy Name 8: Sarvashaastraartha-tattvajnah

Mantra: Om Sarvashaastraartha-tattvajnaya Namah

Meaning - One who knows the inner meaning of all Shastras (Vedic scriptures) or One who comprehends the substance and significance of the Shastras (Vedic scriptures)

Pastime – Alavandhar (Sri Yamunacharya) before his departure, instructed his five main disciples to teach five different aspects to Sri Ramanuja. Periya Nambi performs Pancha Samskaram (Initiation Ceremony) to Sri Ramanuja. Periya Thirumalai Nambi teaches Sri Ramayana, Thirukkoshtiyur Nambi gives Thiru Mantra and teaches the meanings of Charama shloka. Thirumalai Andan teaches Nammalwar's Thiruvaimozhi and Thiruvarangaperumal Arayar was instructed by his Guru Alavandhar to teach some parts of Arulicheyal and Charamopayam (Devotion at the lotus feet of Acharya) to Sri Ramanuja.

When Sri Ramanuja was learning Nammalwar's Thiruvaimozhi from Thirumaalai Andan, Sri Ramanuja will be giving deeper meanings for the verses than Thirumaalai Andan. For many times Thirumaalai Andan will be annoyed by the behavior of his disciple. One fine day, when he continued his teachings, he saw Sri Ramanuja sitting and hearing without interpreting, Thirumaalai Andan asked Sri Ramanuja for his silence, by asking with a funny sentence, "Today you don't have any Vishwamitra Shristi (Imitation heaven created by Sage Vishwamitra)?" for which, Sri Ramanuja again expressed the deeper meanings for Nammalwar's Thiruvaimozhi, completely irritated by the behaviour of his dear disciple Sri Ramanuja, Thirumaalai Andan stopped the discourse and left.

Later, Thirukoshtiyur Nambi heard about this and enquired from Thirumaalai Andan, when Thirumaalai Andan told about the meaning interpreted by Sri Ramanuja, which is not told by Sri Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja was completely misinterpreting the meanings. When Thirukoshtiyur Nambi heard the meanings commented on by Sri Ramanuja, he immediately told Thirumaalai Andan that these meanings are true and were taught by our Guru, Sri Yamunacharya, maybe you forgot or were absent in those discourses and requested Thirumaalai Andan to continue his teachings to Sri Ramanuja on behalf of Sri Yamaunacharya and consider themselves as an instrument to pass on Sri Yamaunacharya's teachings to Sri Ramanuja. Further, Thirukoshtiyur Nambi told Thirumaalai Andan that, Sri Ramanuja being the empowered personality, already knows the meanings of all this literature, but still, we are acting as an instrument in the divine hands of the Supreme Lord for the propagation of Vaishnavism by Sri Ramanuja. After this incident, Thirumaalai Andan continued his teachings to Sri Ramanuja. After learning Thiruvaimozhi from Thirumalai Andan, by the instruction of his Guru Periya Nambi he went on to learn the essence of Vaishnava Sampradhaya from Arayar.

This incident of Sri Ramanuja learning from different Gurus can be compared with Lord Krishna and Lord Balarama both learning from Sandipani Muni. Even though Krishna and Balarama were eternally knowledgeable personalities, they still enacted this pastime of learning as a social custom or to teach the world by

their example. Similarly, Ramanuja, who is Balarama himself, enacted this pastime of learning from various Gurus as a social custom or to teach the world by his example.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Sarvashaastraartha-tattvajnah - One who knows the inner meaning of all Shastras (Vedic scriptures) or One who comprehends the substance and significance of the Shastras (Vedic scriptures),” even though, Sri Ramanuja aware of meanings of all Vedic scriptures, still, he enact a pastime like this of learning.

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Holy Name 9: Sarvajnah

Mantra: Om Sarvajnaya Namah

Meaning – One who is omniscient or One who is all-knowing

Pastime – Parashara Bhattar, the eldest of the two sons of Kuresha, was proving to be a good leader. Many young boys in Sri Rangam used to gather around him when he was hardly five years old. Even his teachers were impressed with his brilliance. Once, a reputed scholar called Sarvajna Bhatta visited Sri Rangam. Sarvajna Bhatta’s disciples and servants used to carry him on a palanquin and a drummer used to go in the front announcing the arrival of Sarvajna Bhatta and singing his glories. Parashara, who was playing with his friends, heard the praises that were showered on his master by the drummer and said, “How can one claim to be a Sarvajna in the presence of Sri Ramanuja? Even great scholars like Dasarathi, Govinda, and my dear father, who have mastered many subjects, consider themselves to be his slaves. This impudence should not go unchallenged.”

Though Parashara was hardly five years old, he went up to Sarvajna Bhatta’s palanquin, picked up a fistful of sand, and said, “Your people claim that you are a Sarvajna, which means one who knows everything. If you know everything please tell me how much sand I have in my hand?”

Being stunned at the question posed by a young boy, Sarvajna Bhatta said, “How can one know how much sand you have in your hand unless one counts them?”

Parashara laughingly said, “I have a fistful of sand in my hand and I have told it without counting. Do not claim that you are a Sarvajna in Sri Rangam unless you know everything. Only the omniscient Supreme Lord can be called Sarvajna. Despite being an Avatara-Purusha (an incarnation of Adisesha) Sri Ramanuja claims himself to be a humble servant of the Lord of Sri Rangam and his guru, Yamunacharya. All the other scholars, who are capable of defeating anyone in a debate, in this town, consider him to be their master.”

Saying so, Parashara went back to play with his friends. Sarvajna Bhatta was stunned and he realized his mistake. He asked his drummer to stop announcing his arrival and glories wherever he went. Sarvajna Bhatta got down from his palanquin and walked back the way he had come. In this way, Sri Parashara Bhattar proclaimed the glory of Sri Ramanuja.

Further, when Parasara Bhattar was very young, he came to Periya Kovil (Lord Ranganatha's shrine) to have a darshan of the Lord. At that time after Parasara Bhattar worships Lord Ranganatha, he comes out of the shrine and Sri Ramanuja, who is seeing Parasara Bhattar in the temple, Sri Ramanuja tells Ananthazhwan and other Vaishnavas, who are with him, that Parasara Bhattar should be treated just like himself. This instruction was further understood by the devotees when Sri Ramanuja appointed Parasara Bhattar as his successor.

Further, A close disciple of Sri Ramanuja was Sri Koorath Alwan, and he did not have Progeny for a long time. With Lord Ranganatha's grace and Sri Ramanuja's blessings, he was blessed with Twins. Then Sri Ramanuja and his disciples went to Sri Koorath Alwan's house to see the child and bless him, on reaching the house Sri Ramanuja asked Embar (Govinda Bhattar) to fetch the children from inside the house. As commanded by his master Embar went inside and fetched the children. When Sri Ramanuja saw them redolent with the Dwaya Mantra, seeing that he asked Embar how is it. then Embar said that when he saw the effulgence of the children, to protect the children, he immediately chanted the Dwaya Mantra. Hence the glow of Dwaya Mantra was there. Then he immediately told Embar to be the preceptor of the Children and duly named them Parasara Bhatta and Vedavyasa Bhatta, (Sri Ramanuja fulfilled one of the three promises he made to Yamunai Thuraivan aka Alavandar).

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sarvajnah – One who is omniscient or One who is all-knowing."

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Holy Name 10: Sajjanapriyah

Mantra: Om Sajjanapriyaya Namah

Meaning - One who is liked by saintly people

Pastime – Before Sri Ramanuja's appearance, during the time of Sri Ramanuja and after the time of Sri Ramanuja. He was liked by everyone especially the saintly people, all of the disciples, Gurus, followers, well-wishers, etc… liked Sri Ramanuja. Apart from this even ordinary people, who were saintly in nature also liked Sri Ramanuja.

Once Sri Ramanuja visited Azhwar Thirunagari, which is the abode of Nammazhwar, and stayed there for some days as part of his preaching mission. He was served by great devotees, disciples, etc… always. One day Sri Ramanuja

goes to the Tamaraparani River to take his bath, during then a washer-man was doing his duties by washing the clothes. When the washer-man, who is saintly in nature, saw Sri Ramanuja coming towards him, he immediately ran towards Sri Ramanuja, paid his respects and sought his blessings. Further, the washer-man had ten sons, for ten sons, he kept the different names of Nammazhwar like Sadagopa, Kurugur Nambi, Maran, Magizhmara, etc…, he called each one of his sons by their name, which represents the name of Nammazhwar, and asked them to rush to get the blessings of Sri Ramanuja. Sri Ramanuja was very happy to see the saintly behaviour and great fortune of the washer-man, who is very much fond of Nammazhwar and kept the names of Nammazhwar for all of his sons. After blessing him and his family, Sri Ramanuja continued his duties.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Sajjanapriyah - One who is liked by saintly people,” not only by his admirers, associates, etc… just ordinary people, who are saintly in nature, liked Sri Ramanuja very much.

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Holy Name 11: Naarayanakripaapaathrah

Mantra: Om Naarayanakripaapaathraaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the eternal beneficiary of Lord Narayana’s grace or Lord Thirunarayana’s grace

Pastime – Once the Tiruman, a mound of white clay, that is used to apply Urdhva Pundra on twelve parts of the body by the Vaishnavas, got over. As Ramanuja used to normally get his supply of Tiruman from a nearby village called Bhaktagrama, he sent his disciples to get some Tiruman. The disciples could not get Tiruman in Bhaktagrama as the white clay in the vicinity was exhausted. As a Vaishnava is not supposed to do anything without applying Urdhva Pundram, Ramanuja became concerned. That night the Lord appeared in Ramanuja’s dream and said, “A deity form of mine lies abandoned in the forest near Yadavadri. A lot of white clay that is used for making Tiruman is available there. Trace my deity and start worshipping it after installing it.”

Sri Ramanuja woke up and sent one of the senior disciples to inform Vishnuvardhana about the dream. Vishnuvardhana came with some soldiers and all of them started to comb the forest in and around Yadavadri, which is popular as Melkote today. According to the scriptures, Yadavadri was one of the important towns and pilgrimage centres in the region. According to popular belief, Lord Dattatreya accepted the renounced order of life in Yadavadri. It is also believed that Prahlada performed penance in Yadavadri to propitiate Lord Narasimha and to overcome the sinful reaction of opposing his father. A beautiful self-manifested deity of Yoga Narasimha, which is believed to be worshipped by Prahlada, is present even today on the top of the hillock in Yadavadri. Despite searching for a very long time, Ramanuja and others could not trace the deity as told by the Lord in Ramanuja’s dream and he became anxious. The search party

decided to rest for a while and Ramanuja slept briefly due to exhaustion. The Lord once again appeared in his dream and said, “A few hundred feet from here is an abandoned well. Our deity is hidden in that well. Take that deity out of the well and start worshipping it.” Some other source says that “Lord directed Ramanuja to a garden of Champaka trees and amid the trees, there was the lush green of Tualsi plants, 40 feet under that area, was the deity of Lord.”

Sri Ramanuja immediately woke up and rushed to the spot mentioned by the Lord. With the help of some of his disciples and soldiers, Ramanuja managed to bring out the deity, which had been lying in the well for a very long time. Ramanuja could also get a lot of white clay for Tiruman from the well. The King directed the soldiers to bring some milk, honey, curds, tender coconuts, jaggery, bananas, ghee, and other things that are required to worship from a nearby village. After coming to know about the discovery, the villagers came in large numbers to see the deity. Some old villagers told Ramanuja that their grandfathers used to tell them about the deity of Yadavadripati and about the glories of worshipping the deity. They also told Ramanuja that their forefathers had to hide the deity to save it from being desecrated by the Muslim kings who had come to invade their kingdom and had forgotten the whereabouts of the deity over time.

Sri Ramanuja performed abhisheka to the deity and consecrated the deity. Ramanuja named the deity Thirunarayana and installed it in a suitable place. Very soon Ramanuja managed to construct a magnificent temple for the deity with the help of his disciple, Vishnuvardhana. A big tank for collecting the water for the Lord’s ablutions and other needs was also constructed as part of the temple. Ramanuja started to live in Yadavadri and worship the deity of Lord Thirunarayana by following Pancharatra Agama along with his disciples. Later, Sri Ramanuja carefully selected some of his very good disciples to render worship to Lord Thirunarayana and then onwards the deity is being worshipped following the scriptures.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Naarayanakripaapaathrah – One who is the eternal beneficiary of Lord Narayana’s grace or Lord Thirunarayana’s grace.”

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Holy Name 12: Sri Bhootapura-nayakah

Mantra: Om Sri Bhootapura nayakaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the leader of Sri Bhootapura (Sriperumbudur)

Pastime – Sriperumbudur (Sri Bhootapura) is the abode of Lord Adi Keshava. As per the legend, once a king tried to kill a tiger that was trying to attack a cow. Despite his efforts, the cow was killed by the tiger and the king incurred the curse of the cow. To expiate himself from sin, he did penance at the place, that is

present region of Sriperumbudur. Pleased by the devotion of the King, Lord Adi Keshava appeared for the king and relieved his curse. Then onwards, Lord Adi Keshava became the predominating deity or leader of Sriperumbudur (Sri Bhootapura), but, it was until the appearance of a great devotee and incarnation of Adisesha, Sri Ramanuja.

Sri Ramanuja, who is the 11th-century Vaishnava saint, appeared at Sriperumbudur (Sri Bhootapura) on the divine order of Supreme Lord Narayana. After living for some time in Sriperumbudur, Sri Ramanuja moved to Kanchipuram and later took Sannyasa and started to live in Sri Rangam. When Sri Ramanuja at his 121st year of age, he was the greatest Acharya in the country and regarded by all the Kings and people. During this time, his disciples understood that Sri Ramanuja may soon wind-up his earthly pastime. So, they craved the deity of Sri Ramanuja (on his order) and brought the deity to Sri Ramanuja in person. By seeing the deity, Sri Ramanuja was mesmerized by its beauty and embraced it and on the order of Sri Ramanuja, the deity was installed in Sriperumbudur, which is the birthplace of Sri Ramanuja, in the Adikeshava Temple. Then onwards, the deity became famous as “Than-ugandha thirumeni” in Tamil, meaning the deity embraced by the Acharya himself. After the appearance of Sri Ramanuja in Sriperumbudur especially in his deity form, Sri Ramanuja became a prominent personality in Sriperumbudur (Sri Bhootapura) by the mercy of Lord Adi Keshava. Whoever visits Sriperumbudur, considers Sri Ramanuja as prominent there, then along with Acharya’s darshan, they will have darshan of Lord Adikeshava, this is the special favour of the Supreme Lord towards his devotee.

Even, Sri Vedanta Desikar once on his way to Sri Rangam, halted at Sriperumbudur, which is the birthplace of Sri Ramanuja, and composed a stotra on Sri Ramanuja to seek his blessings. This composition is called Yatiraja Saptati, which glorifies all the Acharyas and Sri Ramanuja in particular. Further, he stayed there for several days and served the deity of Sri Ramanuja and obtained his special blessings to conquer the opponents and establish Vaishnavism. During this time, nothing is mentioned about Sri Vedanta Desikar’s service to Lord Adi Keshava, because the predominating personality of Sriperumbudur was Sri Ramanuja.

From these incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Sri Bhootapura-nayakah – One who is the leader of Sri Bhootapura (Sriperumbudur).”

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Holy Name 13: Anaghah

Mantra: Om Anaghaaya Namah

Meaning – One who is sinless (spotless) or One who is freed from all vices

Pastime – Sri Ramanujacharya was a great saint, who worked hard to make everybody, right from the cobbler to the nobler reach the lotus feet of Lord Narayana, and engage them in one or another way to serve the lotus feet of Lord Narayana.

Once a cobbler came to Sri Rangam and had a darshan of Lord Ranganatha, after which, he was inspired to render some service to the Lord. So, the cobbler went and approached Sri Ramanuja, who was present at that time, hearing the cobbler's request, Sri Ramanuja was pleased and asked him, "What are the things he is good at?", for which, Cobbler responded, "I know only weaving the sandals (slippers)." Understanding the situation, Sri Ramanuja, who descended to deliver all the fallen souls, irrespective of colour, caste, creed, etc… ordered him to fabricate sandals for Lord Ranganatha, which can be adored by the Lordship. Cobbler was very much delighted by the service, he even doesn't know the measurements, still, he meditated on the lotus feet of Lordship while making the Sandals or some say, Lord Ranganatha gave him the measurements on the sands of the river bed. After completing the Sandals, he brought them to the temple, and Sri Ramanuja offered the same to Lord Ranganatha, it adored the deity of lordship perfectly. Cobbler was very much delighted about the assigned service. Then onwards, every year this tradition of offering Sandals (Padukas) to Lord Ranganatha from the Cobbler community continued.

Sri Rangam is the only temple where one could see the sandals (Padukas) of Lord Sri Ranganatha closer to the Shenbangavalli Nachiyar shrine in the Temple. It is believed that Lord Sri Ranganatha regularly uses these sandals made by devotees from the cobbler community. They make it with due prayers for 48 days of penance by observing strict vows on the banks of River Kaveri before the Lord himself gives them the measurements of sandals on the sands of a river bed. One could notice that those sandals undergo wear and tear after some time as it is believed that Lord Sri Ranganatha wears and uses these sandals (Divine Padukas) by walking inside the temple. These sandals are replaced every year by devotees. Sri Vedanta Desikan rendered verses known as 'Sri Padukasahasram' with 1000 verses in praise of sacred sandals (divine padukas) of Lord Sri Ranganatha.

Usually, certain people try to point their fingers at Acharyas, but Sri Ramanuja is above all criticism because he is the personality, who worked for the benefit of all the people in the society and engaged in the service of the Lordship. In this case, he even engaged Cobbler and his community in the service of the Lordship. That's why, Sri Ramanuja is always known as "Anaghah – One who is sinless (spotless) or One who is freed from all vices."

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Holy Name 14: Bhakthamandaarah

Mantra: Om Bhakthamandaaraaya Namah

Meaning – One who is like a desire tree for his devotees or One who is capable of fulfilling the desires of his devotees

Pastime – From Melukote, Sri Ramanujacharya got ready to go to Sri Rangam. On the following day, the devotees started to cry and Ramanujacharya asked them the reason for their grief. Some of the devotees mustered courage and said, “Though you have told us that you will be here in the form of the deity we cannot expect the deity to talk to us and guide us as you do.”

Ramanuja said, “If you think that I cannot speak to you in that deity form go and try talking to me in that deity form.”

The devotees were stunned at Ramanujacharya’s reply and some of them volunteered to test Ramanujacharya’s claim. They went to the temple to talk with the Ramanujacharya’s deity.

The devotees went to the temple, offered their obeisance to Ramanujacharya’s deity, and said, “*adiyen dasan*”, which means I, your humble servant, am at your service.

Ramanujacharya’s deity reciprocated the devotees' call by saying “ha”.

The devotees rushed back to Ramanujacharya’s presence and narrated whatever had happened to the devotees who had gathered around Ramanuja. Ramanujacharya said, “The scriptures glorify this holy place as Vedadri, Narayanadri, Yadavadri, Dakshina Badrikachalam and Yathisailam. As this is one of the most sacred places on the face of this planet one can attain spiritual perfection and liberation just by staying and serving Lord Thirunarayana and Lord Sampath Kumara. This place will continue to live in my thoughts and please don’t think that I have deserted you. Their Lordships will always guide you and lead you to perfection. Let this tradition established by the alwars, Natha Muni, Yamunacharya, and other worshipful acharyas flourish and spread from here.”

Further, Once a poor Vaishnava used to be the first one in the line and was notorious for demanding prasadam not only for himself but for his entire family consisting of sixteen children! Many times devotees serving in the temple had to miss the share of prasadam because of this. When temple authorities wanted to send him away, he would plea on behalf of his 16 children. One day they brought this to the notice of Sri Ramanuja and said that they would not mind giving him extra prasadam if only he was willing to do some service to the temple. Turning to the Vaishnava, Sri Ramanuja asked him what was preventing him from rendering some service to the temple. He replied, Swamy! Look at my children! They are undernourished and sick most of the time. All my time is spent taking care of them. Moreover, unfortunately, I have not studied the Vedas or the Divya Prabandhams (hymns by the Azhwars) so cannot join in the temple parayanam. What all I know is a part of Vishnu- sahasranamam only! What can I do?" Sri Ramanuja then asked him to recite the Vishnu Sahasranamam to the extent that

he knew it. The Vaishnavite hesitated and then began the recitation. "*visvam visnur vasatkaro bhuua bhavya bhavat-prabhu bhutakrt bhutabhrt*..." Sri Ramanuja looked at him reflectively and said, "You recited the sixth name, Bhutabhrt. Now onwards you must go on doing the Japa of the sixth name, in this manner: Bhutabhrte namah. If you do this, you don't have to seek food; food will come to you, to your place! Will you do it?" The Vaishnava eagerly nodded.

From that day Vaishnava did not come to the temple. But the devotees noticed that a substantial quantity of Prasadam was strangely getting missed daily. The authorities suspected that this should be due to Vaishnava who is managing to steal the prasadam. Sri Ramanuja asked them whether they knew where he stayed. They said, "That is again strange! He has moved out of his house." Sri Ramanuja asked them to search for the Vaishnava and bring him, as he would like to see him. All their efforts were in vain to locate that person. A few weeks later, Sri Ramanuja had to cross the Kollidam river that surrounds Srirangam, for an event in a nearby village. That Vaishnava came running to thank Sri Ramanuja. He offered pranams and started weeping profusely. When he managed to talk, he said, "Swamy! By your Grace, that boy is delivering the prasadam, both times every day! All my children are no longer sick or undernourished. I have moved out of the place near the temple so as not to get into problems with the temple authorities. I am eternally grateful to you. I am also doing the Japa, *'bhutabhrte namah*', constantly." Sri Ramanuja was overwhelmed. "Which boy? What did he say his name was?" asked Sri Ramanuja. The Vaishnava replied that the boy introduced himself as the Servant of Sri Ramanuja! Sri Ramanuja understood what was going on. Sri Ranganatha Himself was delivering the food to the Vaishnava, every day, both in the morning and in the night!

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Bhakthamandaarah – One who is like a desire tree for his devotees or One who is capable of fulfilling the desires of his devotees,” either personally or with his instructions or being present in his deity form.

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Holy Name 15: Keshavananda-vardhanah

Mantra: Om Keshavananda-vardhanaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the source of bliss for his father, Sri Keshava Somayaji

Pastime – When the religion of the Vedas became weakened due to the influence of less intelligent men who blindly performed ritualistic ceremonies and wantonly killed animals in the name of Vedic injunctions, Buddha appeared on the scene as a great reformer. Rejecting the Vedic literature and substituting his rational, atheistic views, Buddha advocated the path of ahimsa, (nonviolence and nirvana-the negation of reality as we know it) as the ultimate goal of life. Soon

after, the philosophy of Shankaracharya overpowered Buddhism and spread throughout India.

The authority of the Upanishads and other Vedic literature was revived by Shankara and employed as weapons to fight the Buddhist doctrine. Interpreting the Vedas to draw a particular conclusion, Shankara established the doctrine of non-dualism, Advaita-Vedanta, stating that all living entities were on an equal level with God. He prominently stressed those texts that afforded an answer to the rationalistic atheism of the Buddhists, yet the teachings of Shankara were not wholly theistic, and thus a further unveiling of the ultimate reality was destined. That destiny was fulfilled through Shri Ramanujacharya.

In Sriperumbudur (a region in Tamilnadu) lived a devotee named, Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji, who is a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and also a performer of Soma Yajna, the sacrifice known as Soma. He was married to Kantimathi (Bhumidevi) and they were living happily. But, Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji wanted to have a progeny, for a long time after marriage they not had any progeny. So, Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji requested Thirukachi Nambi, who is a confidential associate of Lord Varadaraja, to check with Lord Varadraja about his request. When Thirukachi Nambi submitted the request of Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji, Lord Varadaraja informed that “For sure a great devotee will appear to Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji, let him perform Puthrakameshti Yajna at Thiruvallikeni, the abode of Lord Parthasarathi.” When Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji heard the response from Lord Varadaraja via Thirukachi Nambi, he was very pleased. At the same time, Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji observed the situation of the society, where the devotional principles declined with the spread of Mayavada, he felt the need for a personality, who could defend the Mayavada philosophy of Shankara and establish real devotion to the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. All the scriptures and Vedas were misinterpreted by the followers of Mayavada philosophy (Shankara philosophy).

As per the order of Lord Varadaraja, Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji visited the adobe of Lord Parthasarathi, who is none other than Lord Krishna appeared to deliver Bhagavad-Gita, at Thiruvallikeni. Offered his prayers at the lotus feet of Lord Parthasarathi for the deliverance of fallen conditioned souls, and by the appearance of a great personality. So, for the pleasure of the Lordship, he performed the "Puthrakameshti Yajna" on the banks of "Kairavani", the holy tank in Thiruvallikeni, praying to Lord Parthasarathi to bless him with a son, who can deliver the fallen conditioned souls, pleased by his prayers, Lord Parthasarathi appeared in his dream informing him that He Himself would be born as his son in order to highlight the significance of the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita by writing Sribashya (commentary on Vedanta-sutra), further delivering the fallen conditioned souls and establishing the principles of devotion to his lotus feet (Lord Vishnu’s lotus feet). Pleased by the special mercy of Lordship, Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji went on with his services, over time as predicted by Lord Parthasarathi, Kantimathi very soon delivered a boy in 1071 A.D. The baby was very attractive and glowing with spiritual radiance, it signified the appearance of

a great personality, which gave great bliss to Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji, that's why, Sri Ramanuja is known as "Keshavananda-vardhanah – One who is the source of bliss for his father, Sri Keshava Somayaji."

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Holy Name 16: Kaanchipurna Priyasakhah

Mantra: Om Kaanchipurna Priyasakhaaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the dearest associate of Sri Kanchipurna (Thirukachi Nambi)

Pastime – Yamunacharya's disciple, Sri Kanchipurna was popular as a great devotee of Lord Varadaraja of Kanchipuram and it is widely believed that he used to directly speak to the Lord. Therefore, even the Brahmin devotees used to respect Kanchipurna though he was a sudra by birth. Kanchipurna used to frequently visit Poonamale, which was his birthplace, to worship the Lord there and also visit Sriperumbadur, which is situated between Kanchipuram and Poonamale, in the process. During one such visit, Ramanuja invited Kanchipurna to his house for dinner. Seeing the auspicious marks on Ramanuja's body and his countenance, Kanchipurna could not refuse. Ramanuja became very happy to host Kanchipurna. Ramanuja tried to press Kanchipurna's feet to make him comfortable as he had walked the entire day and also as a mark of respect and devotion to a great devotee, but Kanchipurna did not allow him to do so. Kanchipurna pulled back his feet and said, "How can you touch the feet of your servant? I am supposed to serve you, please don't humiliate me by touching my feet."

Sri Ramanuja said, "If you do not allow me to serve you, I would consider myself unfortunate. One will not become a Brahmin just by wearing the sacred thread around him but by becoming a good devotee of the Lord and by serving Him. By making Lokasaranga Muni carry Thirupani Alwar around the streets of Sri Rangam and taking Thirupani Alwar into the sanctum sanctorum, the Lord has established the principle."

Kanchipurna was very pleased with Ramanuja's words and regarded him as a very enlightened person. Sri Ramanuja started to consider Kanchipurna as his guide and mentor since then.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Kaanchipurna Priyasakhah – One who is the dearest associate of Sri Kanchipurna (Thirukachi Nambi)."

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Holy Name 17: Pranathaarthi Vinaashakah

Mantra: Om Pranathaarthi Vinaashakaya Namah

Meaning - One who dispels or destroys the distress of those who surrendered to him

Pastime – Once Ramanujacharya was giving a discourse on the Ramayana, in Sri Rangam. He had just got to the point where Vibhishana approached Rama and said he had left everything behind in Sri Lanka and had come to Rama. At that point, Ramanuja heard someone crying. He stopped the discourse, to find out who was crying, and why he was crying, elaborated Kidambi Narayanan, in a discourse.

Sri Ramanujacharya discovered that it was his disciple Pillai Urangavilli Dasa (Danurdasa), who was weeping. When Ramanujacharya asked him why he was crying, Pillai Urangavilli Dasa replied that Vibhishana had left behind his wealth and his family, and had come to Lord Rama, with nothing to call his own. And yet, even Vibhishana was kept waiting by the Lord and was taken into the Lord's camp only after much debate and discussion had taken place. The Lord had allowed such discussions, before putting forth his point of view that Vibhishana should be accepted. The Lord could have just decided to accept Vibhishana, without making him wait, but the Lord had not done so. If the Lord made Vibhishana wait for so long before he was accepted, what would He do in the case of people like me (Pillai Urangavilli Dasa)? That was the question in Pillai Urangavilli Dasa's mind.

Ramanuja assured Pillai Urangavilli Dasa that his position was different from Vibhishana's. Ramanuja told Pillai Urangavilli Dasa that he was sure to be saved and that he need have no doubts in this matter. Pillai Urangavilli Dasa, because of his connection with Ramanujacharya, would be saved. There was no reason for Pillai Urangavilli Dasa to doubt the Lord's acceptance of his surrender, for he had in Ramanuja, an Acharya, who himself came from an unbroken lineage, that started with Lord Vishnu Himself.

In his Nyasa Tilakam, Vedanta Desika gives an example to show how our connection with an Acharya benefits us. A king has a loyal minister. The king rewards the minister for his loyalty. The minister takes home the gifts the king gives him, for the minister wants his wife and children to enjoy the gifts. They know nothing about the king, but they get to enjoy the gifts of the king, because of their connection with the minister. Likewise, our having an Acharya is enough for the Lord to save us and take us back to his abode, Vishnu-loka.

Further, Once Kidaambi Achan visits Thirumalirun cholai, Madurai. Lord Azhagar asks Kidaambi Achan to recite something. Kidaambi Achan starts reciting verses from Yamunacharya's Stotra Ratna "*aparadha sahasra bhajanam … agathim.*". In this verse, Yamauncharya says the word "agathim" meaning "He has no other refuge to surrender." When Kidaambi Achan recited this verse with tears in his eyes, Lord Azhagar chastises him saying "How can you say you have no refuge

after surrendering to Sri Ramanuja?" In this way, Lord Azhagar reciprocated with Kidaambi Achan.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Pranathaarthi Vinaashakah - One who dispels or destroys the distress of those who surrendered to him."

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Holy Name 18: Punyasankeerthanah

Mantra: Om Punyasankeerthanaaya Namah

Meaning – One whose holy names and glories, purify and bring auspiciousness to reciter

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja graced a devotee named Andhra Purna initiated him as his disciple and named him Sri Vaduga Nambi. Over time, he became the cook of Sri Ramanuja. Sri Vaduga Nambi's (Andhra Purna) attachment to Sri Ramanuja is so much that he used to consider Sri Ramanuja as his Lord and even he did not consider Lord Narayana. If someone chants the holy names of Lord Narayana, Vaduga Nambi used to close his ears asking, "Why you are not chanting the holy names of Sri Ramanuja? Lord Narayana's holy names are great, there is no doubt about it, but, Sri Ramanuja's holy names are far greater." People used to be mesmerized by his devotion to Sri Ramanuja. He is the one, who composed Sri Ramanuja Ashtottra Shatanamavalli (108 Holy Names of Sri Ramanuja).

After Sri Ramanuja ascends to Sri Vaikunta, Vaduga Nambi returns to his native village at Salagrama, where he preaches the glories of Sri Ramanuja. He would not consume the holy water of anyone other than the water that washed the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja. He constantly worshipped Sri Ramanuja's lotus feet and taught his disciples that Sri Ramanuja's lotus feet were the ultimate goal and spent the rest of his time in Salagrama and finally attained the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja.

When Vaduga Nambi ascends to Sri Vaikunta, one Vaishnava informs that to Arulala Perumal Emperumanar (yet another disciple of Sri Ramanuja) saying "Your Godbrother Vaduga Nambi ascended to Sri Vaikunta, the abode of Lord Vishnu". Arulala Perumal Emperumanar corrects him by saying "Since my Godbrother Vaduga Nambi was completely dedicated to the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja, you should say that he attained the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja. You should not say he ascended to Sri Vaikunta, the abode of Lord Vishnu".

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Punyasankeerthanah – One whose holy names and glories, purify and bring auspiciousness to reciter," many by chanting the Lord's holy names and attain perfection, Sri Vaduga Nambi chants Sri Ramanuja's holy names and meditates on Sri Ramanuja and attained perfection.

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Holy Name 19: Punyah

Mantra: Om Punyaaya Namah

Meaning – One who is righteous or One who leads his followers in the righteous path

Pastime – After the disappearance of Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja went into a depression after returning from Sri Rangam. He was constantly reminded of Yamunacharya and he started lamenting for not having met the great Acharya during his lifetime. As Yamunacharya had quit this planet even before Ramanuja could overcome the grief of his mother's death, he could not cope with the grief. He spent most of his time in solitude as he no longer enjoyed the company of his wife, though she was beautiful and dutiful. His only source of solace was Kanchipurna's company. He never used to miss an opportunity to discuss the Lord's glories and scriptures with Kanchipurna. Ramanuja started to become anxious about the future of his spiritual life. The enchanting smile disappeared from Ramanuja's face and his comely form began to lose luster. Kanchipurna noticed Ramanuja's agony and said, "My child, don't lose hope, surrender to Lord Varadaraja, serve Him with love, bring water for His ablutions regularly as you are doing now and He will take care of you. The great Yamunacharya quit his body after he achieved what he was sent for."

Ramanuja fell at Kanchipurna's feet and said, "Sir, please accept me as your disciple and don't deny me the shade of your lotus feet just because I am a Brahmana. By serving the Lord day and night you have become competent enough to transform a pariah into a Brahmana."

Kanchipurna lifted Ramanuja and said, "My boy don't humiliate me by falling at my feet. I am a low-born Shudra and you are a Brahmana, I cannot accept you as a disciple for the same reason. Please have patience and trust the Lord. He will lead you to the right guru shortly."

Sri Ramanuja thought that Kanchipurna was avoiding him because he was unworthy and decided to purify himself before trying to convince Kanchipurna to accept him as his disciple once again. After thinking of various means to purify himself, Ramanuja decided to invite Kanchipurna for lunch one day and eat his leftovers to purify himself, as eating the leftovers of great Vaishnavas is supposed to be very sanctifying. Kanchipurna readily accepted Ramanuja's invitation and said, "I shall overcome the rajas and tamas in me by dining at your house."

Ramanuja became very happy and immediately rushed home. He called his wife, Rakshakambal, and said, "Prepare a feast tomorrow, the noble Kanchipurna is coming home to have his meals and to bless us." Dutiful Rakshakambal woke up very early in the morning the following day and started preparing a variety of dishes after taking her bath. Ramanuja went to Kanchipurna's kuteeram to fetch him. Kanchipurna had come to know about Ramanuja's intentions. Therefore, he reached Ramanuja's house through another route. Seeing Kanchipurna, Rakshakambal said, "Sir, my husband has gone to your kuteeram to fetch you. Wait for some time, he will return very soon."

Kanchipurna said, “Mother, please serve me the food immediately as I will be late for the Lord’s service if I wait till your husband returns.”

Rakshakambal obeyed Kanchipurna and served him food thinking he might go away without eating if she delayed. Kanchipurna finished his meals, threw the leaf in which he ate at a distance, cleansed the floor with turmeric and cow dung, and left hurriedly. After searching for Kanchipurna at different places, Ramanuja returned home to see if he had come to have his meals as promised by him.

As varnashrama dharma was strictly practised in those days, a Brahmana was not supposed to eat the leftovers of Shudras. Therefore, Rakshakambal gave the remnants to a neighbouring Shudra woman and cleansed the house. She once again took a bath and started preparing food for Ramanuja. Ramanuja returned home and was shocked to see his wife cooking once again.

He asked Rakshakambal if Kanchipurna had finished his lunch. She said, “I requested Kanchipurna to wait for you and he told me that he would be late for the Lord’s service and requested me to serve the meals. Fearing that he might go away without eating, I served him.” Ramanuja asked his wife about the leftovers and Rakshakambal said, “I gave it to the neighbouring Shudra woman. I have started preparing food for you after taking a bath once again.

How can I serve you the leftovers of a Shudra?” Ramanuja started to cry beating his forehead and said, “You foolish woman, how can you consider Kanchipurna, a great devotee of Lord Varadaraja, as a Shudra? I wanted to purify myself by having the leftovers of Kanchipurna after he finished his meals and you have spoilt everything.” It is a well-known fact that Lord Varadaraja used to directly talk with Kanchipurna and many people in and around Kanchipuram knew about it as they had seen him talking loudly to some invisible person. Everyone in the town used to respect Kanchipurna and he never tried to take any advantage of the trust that people had in him. He was frequently embarrassed due to the adoration that he used to receive from people. Still, Sri Ramanuja used to consider him as his Guru and offered him all respect.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Punyah – One who is righteous or One who leads his followers in the righteous path,” having this quality of righteousness, Sri Ramanuja leads all of his followers in the righteous path

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Holy Name 20: Brahmaraakshasa Mokshakah

Mantra: Om Brahmaraakshasa Mokshakaaya Namah

Meaning - One who drove away the evil spirit (Brahma-rakshasa) that once possessed (the daughter of Chola King)

Pastime – In addition to being an acclaimed philosopher, Yadava Prakasha was a great magician and exorcist. He was capable of curing people who were possessed by ghosts and Brahma Rakshasas (very powerful spirits). People used to come from far-off places to consult him. The then Chola king’s daughter was

possessed by a Brahma Rakshasa and she used to tear off her clothes due to the spirit's influence. The king brought many exorcists and all their efforts failed. He summoned Yadava Prakasha to cure his daughter after he came to know about his expertise in exorcism. When Yadava Prakasha reached the palace to exorcise the spirit away from the princess, the Brahma Rakshasa laughed at him and said, "I am more powerful than you and I know all the mantras that you know. You cannot do anything to me; go away without wasting your time."

Yadava Prakasha ignored the Brahma Rakshasa's advice and started to perform various rituals to exorcise the spirit from the body of the young princess. The Brahma Rakshasa started chanting the Mantras that could counter the effects of the rituals that were being performed by Yadava Prakasha. Yadava Prakasha did not know what to do and became concerned. The Brahma Rakshasa once again said, "By now you would have realized my might. If you want me to quit the tender frame of this noble princess, summon your disciple Ramanuja, who is endowed with great spiritual strength by the virtue of being a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. The sign that his hands reach to his knees when he stands erect, his broad forehead, chest, and shoulders indicate that he is of divine origin; therefore, bring Ramanuja here without any delay."

Yadava Prakasha could not believe the words of the Brahma Rakshasa and he summoned Ramanuja to see if he could drive away from the spirit from the body of the princess. As soon as Ramanuja reached the palace, the Brahma Rakshasa in the princess's body folded his hands and said, "Adorable sir, please forgive me for troubling you. I will quit this body as soon as you place your feet on my head as that is sufficient for my emancipation. Pray consider this request of mine and save me from this wretched state."

Ramanuja placed both his feet on the head of the princess and said, "Now that I have satisfied your desire, release the princess and leave some sign for us to believe that you have left the princess."

The Brahma Rakshasa thanked Ramanuja and said, "I will immediately leave the body of the princess and break one of the branches of the Banyan tree that is standing next to the window on my way."

As soon as the Brahma Rakshasa uttered the aforesaid words, the topmost branch of the Banyan tree broke making a screeching sound. The princess regained her senses and started to feel ashamed as she had torn all her clothes due to the influence of the Brahma Rakshasa. The princess rushed to the neighbouring enclosure where her maids were waiting for her. After coming to know about the recovery of his daughter, the king immediately rushed to the palace and worshipped Ramanuja's feet and gave a lot of presents to him, Yadava Prakasha and others who had accompanied them. Ramanuja's fame started to spread across Kanchipuram and the Chola kingdom after he cured the princess and Yadava Prakasha, who used to hate Ramanuja till then, started

fearing him. However, Ramanuja continued his studies under Yadava Prakasha as usual.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Brahmaraakshasa Mokshakah - One who drove away the evil spirit (Brahma-rakshasa) that once possessed (the daughter of Chola King)."

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Holy Name 21: Yaadhavapaadhithaapaartha-vrikshachedha-kutaarakah

Mantra: Om Yaadhavapaadhithaapaartha-vrikshachedha-kutaarakaya Namah

Meaning – One who became like an axe to cut the wild tree of wrong interpretation of the Vedanta given by his preceptor, Sri Yadavaprakasha

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja's inquisitiveness and quest for the absolute truth led him to Yadava Prakasha, who was a very popular scholar in and around Kanchipuram. Yadava Prakasha was an ardent follower of the Advaita (monism or non-dualism) school of thought and, therefore, was of the firm belief that the Supreme Brahman is formless and devoid of any qualities. However, Ramanuja was a firm believer in God with form and was also a staunch believer of Deity worship as advocated in Pancharatra-Agama. Therefore, Ramanuja used to find it difficult to digest the interpretation given by Yadava Prakasha to some of the passages in the scriptures. Yet, he continued his Vedantic education; as an inquisitive seeker of the Supreme Lord had to systematically study Vedanta in those days.

Following tradition, Ramanuja and other disciples of Yadava Prakasha used to stay with him, serve him and study whenever he taught them the philosophy that he was proficient in. Once, Ramanuja was giving an oil massage to Yadava Prakasha and some of his disciples requested him to tell them the meaning of a particular passage, which describes the beauty of the Supreme Lord's eyes, from the first chapter of Chandogya Upanishad.

The passage reads, "tasya nayane yatha kapyasam pundarikame-vamakshini" and Yadava Prakasha interpreted the passage as "the two eyes of that Golden Purusha (the Supreme Lord) is like the lotuses which are red like the posteriors of a monkey."

Ramanuja, who was very devoted to the Supreme Lord, could not digest the interpretation given by Yadava Prakasha and was pained when he compared the Lord's eyes to the posteriors of a monkey. Tears started trickling down from Ramanuja's eyes and his throat was choked due to the intense mental agony, which he underwent after listening to his preceptor's words. The hot tears started falling on Yadava Prakasha's back. Yadava Prakasha was disturbed to see tears in his favourite disciple's eyes and asked him the reason for his agony. Ramanuja said, "I am pained at the interpretation given by you. A noble soul like

you should not compare the all-merciful Lord's eyes to the posteriors of a monkey."

Yadava Prakasha could not digest Ramanuja's reply and he thought that Ramanuja was being impudent by trying to find fault with his way of interpreting scriptures as students were not supposed to speak against their preceptors in those days. Yadava Prakasha said, "This interpretation is given by none other than Shankaracharya himself. Can you interpret the passage better than him?"

Ramanuja replied, "I can interpret it by the blessings of a noble soul like you. Please permit me to do so."

Yadava Prakasha asked Ramanuja to go ahead and the young Ramanuja said, "The term kapyasm has been wrongly interpreted as a monkey and, therefore, the Supreme Lord's eyes are wrongly compared to the posteriors of a monkey. If the term can be split as kam-jalam-pibati, which means, he who drinks water, i.e., Sun. The root asa is indicative of something that blossoms. Therefore, the entire term can be interpreted as that which has blossomed by the sun. Therefore, the passage should be interpreted as the eyes of the Golden Purusha is as lovely as the lotus that is blossomed by the rays of the sun."

Yadava Prakasha did not find words to refute the interpretation given by Ramanuja and he did not utter a word.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Yaadhavapaadhithaapaartha-vrikshachedha-kutaarakah – One who became like an axe to cut the wild tree of wrong interpretation of the Vedanta given by his preceptor, Sri Yadavaprakasha."

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Holy Name 22: Amoghah

Mantra: Om Amoghaaya Namah

Meaning – One who is infallible or spotless or unfailing

Pastime – Once a very humble Brahmana requested Ramanuja to accept him as a disciple and enlighten him by imparting some spiritual knowledge. The sacred mantras were not revealed to those who were not very serious in practising their spiritual life. Moreover, Ghostipurna had asked Ramanuja not to reveal the sacred Ashtakshari Mantra to anyone without testing their seriousness in practising their devotional life. Ramanuja said, "The sacred mantras cannot be revealed unless one's seriousness and determination in practising his devotional life is tested. You will have to do some service in the ashram till you gain my confidence to get the sacred mantras, which are the means to liberation."

The Brahmana readily agreed and said, “Holy sir I am willing to stay in the ashram and do whatever you want me to do. Please accept me as your disciple and impart me the knowledge that would help me attain the mercy of the Lord. Please tell me the services that are supposed to be done by me.”

Ramanuja liked the Brahmana’s humility and desired to become like him, and also in that way, he wished to test the seriousness of Brahmana. Sri Ramanuja said, “Humble Brahmanas like you are supposed to be very holy. Therefore, I would like to wash your feet after I perform my deity worship and consume the water that is used to wash your feet to cleanse myself. You should appear before me every morning immediately after I finish my ablutions.”

The Brahmana agreed to the condition set by Ramanuja without uttering a word. The Brahmana used to take his bath much before everyone and used to appear before Ramanuja immediately after performing his deity worship and Ramanuja used to wash his feet and consume some water used to wash his feet every day. Everyone used to laugh at the Brahmana for his thoughtlessness and yet the Brahmana never missed the service assigned to him. Once, Ramanuja hurriedly went to Lord Ranganatha’s temple without noticing the Brahmana as he had some very important work to attend. Ramanuja returned to the ashram very late in the night and noticed the Brahmana standing in the place that was assigned to him. Ramanuja asked the Brahmana if he stood the entire day like that without moving from there. The Brahmana replied, “How can I disobey my guru? I must carry out your command.”

Ramanuja was impressed with the Brahmana and told him that he had attained the highest stage of dasya bhakti, wherein one serves the Lord and his devotees as their servants. Ramanuja revealed the sacred Ashtakshari Mantra to the Brahmana and accepted him as a disciple.

Further, once a disciple named, Vangi Purathu Nambi requests Sri Ramanuja to teach him the process of daily worship at home. Sri Ramanuja was naturally busy with many duties and was unable to spend the time and teach him. But once in Vangi Purathu Nambi’s absence, Sri Ramanuja started teaching the process of daily worship to Kuratazhwan and Maruthi Siriyandan. At that time Vangi Purathu Nambi enters the room and seeing him Sri Ramanuja feels great emotions. He says at that time “I had this doubt in my mind for a long time. Now I realize why Lord Krishna, even though being Supreme Lord was feeling scared after being caught stealing butter. I am going through the same emotions now – when you requested, I did not teach you this but somehow I started teaching them the same. Even though I am Acharya and you are a disciple and I don’t have to fear for you, because of my deed, I am feeling scared looking at you”. Such was the greatness of our Sri Ramanuja that when he appeared to make a so-called mistake, he openly accepted it and also explained a great principle in that connection.

Further, Sri Rangam, which is the abode of Lord Ranganatha, is known as Bhuloka Vaikuntam. Sri Ramanujacharya made his headquarters as Sri Rangam and propagated Vaishnavism. On the same island of Sri Rangam exists the temple for Lord Shiva and Parvati, the temple is known as Sri Jambhukeshwara Temple or Thiruvanaikaval, even though Lord Shiva devotedly stays there as the guard for the holy abode of Sri Rangam and Lord Ranganatha. Still, Shavites, the followers of Lord Shiva, used to speculate a lot and consider Lord Shiva as the Supreme Lord, because of this false idea, there used to be friction between Vaishnavas and Shavites, even though Vaishnavas are clear in the vision about the position of Lord Shiva to be the topmost Vaishnava. As part of regular routine, Lord Ranganatha deity (procession deity) used to carry across Sri Rangam, being the Supreme Lord of Sri Rangam, demigods and the entire creation, he visits all the shrines in Sri Rangam and blesses them, during this time, all the deities used to come out of their shrine to offer their respects to Supreme Lord Ranganatha.

During the time of Sri Ramanuja, which is the 10th and 11th centuries, the conflict between Vaishnavas and Shavites was at its peak, there were several debates and clashes. Once Lord Ranganatha deity was taken in procession and as usual, he travelled to various shrines across the Sri Rangam, Sri Ramanuja also accompanied the procession of Lord Ranganatha. But, when the deity arrived at the temple of Sri Jambhukeshwara or Thiruvanaikaval, Lord Shiva along with Parvati came in a palanquin to offer their respects to their master, Lord Ranganatha. When this was happening, there were heavy downpours started, and taking back the deity to the temple of Lord Ranganatha was difficult until the rain stopped. Thinking of all these pros and cons, the devotees took the deity of Lord Ranganatha inside the temple of Thiruvanaikaval and rested at the Mantapam, all other people also went inside the temple and took shelter in the Mantapam. Meanwhile, Sri Ramanuja, who was also in the procession, did not go inside the temple of Thiruvanaikaval but was getting drenched in the heavy rain outside the temple and patiently waiting for the rain to stop and resume the procession of Lord Ranganatha. Some Shavites absorbed this incident and went to Sri Ramanuja, who was getting drenched in the rain, and said, "Your Lord himself came inside the temple and why don't you follow the same?" For this, Sri Ramanuja replied, "Lord Ranganatha is Purusha (enjoyer) and he can visit any Prakriti (to be enjoyed). But, I am Prakriti, I can't visit other Purusha (enjoyer) apart from my Lord." In other words, all the Jivas are Prakriti and only one Purusha, which is Supreme Lord Narayana. Sri Ramanuja stated that Lord Ranganatha being a Supreme enjoyer, can go anywhere and enjoy with any of his Prakriti, in this case, Lord Shiva. But, being obedient to the Supreme Lord, Sri Ramanuja doesn't want to visit other Purusha, even for ordinary things.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Amoghah – One who is infallible or spotless or unfailing,” even though some of these incidents appear as fallible, Sri Ramanuja still enacts these pastimes to teach examples to his dear disciples. But, being the staunch devotee of the Lord Narayana, he was unfailing and infallible in his behaviour.

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Holy Name 23: Lakshmana Muni

Mantra: Om Lakshmana Munaye Namah

Meaning – One who is an incarnation of Lakshmana, the brother of Lord Rama

Pastime – In Treta-yuga, Lord Rama appeared along with his three brothers, Bharatha, Lakshmana, and Shatrugna. Lakshmana became the prominent servant of Lord Rama, and being the incarnation of Adisesha, he made his life goal as the service to Lord Rama. Ramayana explains the service of Lakshmana to Lord Rama in great detail. Lord Rama, always glorifies the service rendered by anyone and everyone, but he is not able to reciprocate the loving service rendered by his dear brother Lakshmana. Being very much impressed by the services, Lord Rama wanted to reciprocate with Lakshmana and wanted to serve him in future incarnations. Thus, when he appeared as Krishna in Dwapara-yuga he made Balarama appear as his elder brother and performed service to Balarama (Who in turn is Lakshmana's incarnation). Not fully satisfied with this, when Lakshmana appeared as Sri Ramanuja in Kali-yuga, Lord Rama incarnated himself as Dasarathi (Mudaliandan) as Sri Ramanuja's cousin and did services to Sri Ramanuja and felt satisfied.

Vaadhoola Kula Thilaka Sri Anantha Narayana Dikshithar and Nachiyarammal (Sri Ramanuja's elder sister) haven't had a child for a long time and wish to have one and to get blessed with a child they are preparing to go to Tirumala to pray and plead with Lord Srinivasa for a child. On the way on their pilgrimage, they were resting for a night, Lord Rama's deity, which is their worshippable deity that they took during their journey for daily worship, appeared in their dream and said "You don't have to go Thirumala. I will myself be born as your son. Name him as 'Dasarathi'." Dasarathi refers to the sons of King Dasaratha like how Lord Rama was also called. As told by Lord Rama in their dream, soon they were blessed with a baby boy, who was none other than Lord Rama himself, thus Dasarathi (Mudaliandan) is an incarnation of Lord Rama, who appeared to serve his dear brother Lakshmana (Sri Ramanuja). Throughout his life, Dasarathi's only goal is service to the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja. When Sri Ramanuja took Sannyasa by renouncing everything, he denied renouncing his cousin Dasarathi by stating, "If I renounce Dasarathi, it is like renouncing Lord Rama, he will be always with me, whatever may be the situation."

Further, when the Supreme Lord appeared as Lord Rama, his servant Adisesha appeared as his younger brother, Lakshmana, and served his lotus feet throughout his life. During that time, Lord Rama was given the deity of the Solar dynasty, Lord Ranganatha, to King Vibhishana, that deity was established in Sri Rangam. This incident occurred in Treta-yuga. Much later in Kali-yuga, the worship of Lord Ranganatha was severely hampered, to re-establish the worship of Lord Ranganatha in great pomp, the same Lakshmana appeared as Sri

Ramanuja but this time as a Sannyasi (ascetic), the same Rama appeared as Dasarathi (Mudaliandan) and throughout their life engaged in the service of Lord Ranganatha and at last disappeared at Lord Ranganatha's lotus feet.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Lakshmana Muni – One who is an incarnation of Lakshmana, the brother of Lord Rama," Lakshmana-muni is Sri Ramanuja. Rishi and Muni are the most ancient sages of the past. The name 'Lakshmana-muni' suggests the ideal of asceticism expounded in the personality of Sri Ramanuja.

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Holy Name 24: Shaaradhaa Shoka Naashanah

Mantra: Om Shaaradhaa Shoka Naashanaaya Namah

Meaning - One who is the dispeller of the misery of Goddess Sharada (Saraswati – The Goddess of Learning)

Pastime – Due to the wrong interpretation of Vedanta-sutra or Brahma-sutra by Sri Shankaracharya, Mayavada spread like wildfire. Saintly people and demigods were very unhappy about it, especially Vaishnava Acharyas, Goddess Saraswati (The Goddess of Learning). So, Sri Ramanuja, who appeared to subdue Mayavada, gave a word to his Guru, Sri Yamunacharya, that he would write a commentary on the Brahma sutra. Accordingly, Sri Ramanuja along with his disciple Kuresha went to Sharada-Peeta in Kashmir to obtain a copy of the manuscript. During that time it was very difficult to obtain a copy of the manuscript. When he requested the King for the manuscript, the court scholar understood Sri Ramanuja's purpose and guided the King to send Sri Ramanuja away, the King did the same.

Sri Ramanuja became very sad as he did not get a copy of Brahma-sutras and slept near the library that housed the script that night. Goddess Sarasvati appeared with tears in Ramanuja's dream that night and said, "You have travelled a long distance just to get the copy of Brahma-sutras and to fulfil the promise made to your guru. Your desire might be fulfilled if you can interpret the famous passage, '*tasya nayane yatha kapyasam pundarikame-vamakshini*', from Chandogya Upanishad correctly."

Ramanuja saluted Sarasvati and after taking her blessings said, "The term kapyasam can be split as kam-jalam-pibati, which means he who drinks water, i.e., Sun. The root asa is indicative of something that blossoms. Therefore, the entire term can be interpreted as that which has blossomed by the sun. Therefore, the passage should be interpreted as the eyes of the Golden Purusha is as lovely as the lotus that blooms due to the rays of the sun."

Goddess Sarasvati became very happy as soon as she heard Ramanuja's interpretation of the passage from Chandogya Upanishad and stopped crying.

Sarasvati handed over the book to Ramanuja and said, “Please leave this place immediately as these people will not allow you to take this copy of Brahma-sutras if they come to know that I have handed over the book to you. You will complete the commentary very soon and your commentary will become popular as Sri-Bhashya. It will be an authoritative guiding light for everyone who aspires to gain spiritual knowledge and for everyone who attempts to write a commentary on the Brahma-sutras in the future.”

According to popular belief, Sarasvati started crying after Shankaracharya compared the beauty of the Lord’s eyes to the posteriors of the monkey while interpreting the said passage and she stopped crying after listening to Ramanuja’s interpretation.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Shaaradhaa Shoka Naashanah - One who is the dispeller of the misery of Goddess Sharada (Saraswati – The Goddess of Learning).”

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Holy Name 25: Niranthara Jana-ajnana Nirmochana Vichakshanah

Mantra: Om Niranthara Jana-ajnana Nirmochana Vichakshanaaya Namah

Meaning – One who is an expert in removing the ignorance of people and he constantly endeavoured it

Pastime – Once, a grand Brahmotsava festival was being celebrated at Sri-Rangam and the Lord was taken out in a procession on Garuda as part of the festival. A lot of devotees had come from different places to witness the festival and Sri-Rangam was fully crowded. As the festival was about to conclude, most of the devotees were planning to return and were busy buying prasadam to start their return journey. After taking part in the festivities and receiving the prasadam from the chief priest of Lord Ranganatha’s temple, Ramanuja was returning to his ashram along with his disciples. Ramanuja was walking with his hands on the shoulders of Dasarathi and was narrating the glories of taking part in the Garuda Seva of Lord Ranganatha. All of a sudden his attention was drawn towards a well-built young man who was walking backwards with his eyes and attention focused on the bewitching eyes of a young damsel who was walking along with him. The young man was so engrossed in enjoying the beauty of the lady’s eyes that he was oblivious to his surroundings and was shamelessly admiring her beauty.

Ramanuja was too shocked to see the shamelessness of the young man. He asked one of his disciples to bring the young man to him. One of the disciples went to the young man and stood close to him. The young man noticed Ramanuja’s disciple and, with folded hands, said, “Sir, what brings you here? A learned Brahmana like you are worthy of respect. Please tell me if I can do anything for you.”

Ramanuja's disciples said, "I am one of the disciples of the great Yatiraja. I was going with my master and his graceful glance fell on you due to your good fortune. Yatiraja has asked me to bring you to his presence out of his causeless mercy."

Though the young man was reluctant to go, he could not say no to the Brahmin after hearing the name of Yatiraja as he was very popular and widely respected. The young man went to Ramanuja's presence and offered his obeisance to Ramanuja and stood by the side of one of the disciples with folded hands.

Ramanuja said, "Where do you come from? What brings you here? Why are you shamelessly looking into the eyes of that young lady in full public view? How can you be so enamoured by an ordinary female and shamelessly adore her like that?"

The young man said, "I am, Danurdasa, a wrestler from Nichulapuram, and I had come here to witness the Garuda Seva of the Lord. She is Hemamba and I am madly in love with her. The beauty of her eyes is such that I cannot take my eyes off her and it can captivate anyone. Though I am not married to her I have resolved to marry her and not look at anyone else."

Ramanuja was stunned at the reply given by Danurdasa and started to admire the amazing power of Prakriti (material nature), its ability to influence the minds of people, and to keep them in its grip. Ramanuja said, "What will you do if I show you a pair of eyes that are many times more beautiful and captivating than the eyes of your lady love?"

Danurdasa said, "I have not come across the eyes that are more beautiful than that of Hemamba. If you can show me the pair of eyes that are more beautiful than hers I will become a slave to those eyes and spend the rest of my life in their service."

Out of his causeless mercy, Ramanuja had decided to reform Danurdasa and, following his plan, Ramanuja asked Danurdasa to meet him near the main gate of the temple that evening before leaving for his ashram. Danurdasa decided to come back along with Hemamba that evening to find out if he could see a pair of eyes that were more beautiful than Hemamba's.

Danurdasa had come to the main gates of the temple much before the prefixed time and was eagerly waiting for Ramanuja to come. As usual, Ramanuja and his disciples came to the temple to have the darshan of the Lord that evening and Danurdasa accompanied them. As soon as they reached the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Ranganatha's temple, Ramanuja asked Danurdasa to come forward. Danurdasa, who was very attached to his lady love, came to the door of the sanctum sanctorum along with Hemamba at once. The chief priest of the temple performed arati to the Lord following the instructions of Ramanuja. After the

arati, Ramanuja asked the chief priest to take the lamp closer to the eyes of Lord Ranganatha and said, “Behold the most beautiful and captivating eyes in the entire creation. May Lord Ranganatha reveal the divine beauty of His eyes to you!”

Danurdasa saw the beautiful eyes of Lord Ranganatha and became speechless for some time. He was so captivated by the eyes of the Lord that he forgot Hemamba and started thinking about the Lord. He decided to dedicate the rest of his life to serving the Lord just by seeing the captivating beauty of the Lord’s eyes. As soon as he went out of the main hall of Lord Ranganatha’s temple, Danurdasa prostrated before Ramanuja and thanked him for opening his eyes. Danurdasa requested Ramanuja to accept him as a disciple. Both Danurdasa and Hemamba got married with the blessings of Ramanuja. Ramanuja initiated Danurdasa and Hemamba by performing the five-fold sacraments and both of them continued to live in Sri-Rangam and serve Ramanuja. So much so that, they became very dear disciples of Sri Ramanuja and obtained his association. At last attained the abode of Lord Vishnu, the spiritual world.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Niranthara Jana-ajnana Nirmochana Vichakshanah – One who is an expert in removing the ignorance of people and he constantly endeavoured it.”

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Holy Name 26: Vedanta-dvaya-sarajna

Mantra: Om Vedanta-dvaya-sarajnaya Namah

Meaning – One who is completely aware of two Vedantas (Sanskrit and Dravidian (Tamil))

Pastime – On the order of Sri Ramanuja, Ananthalvan moves to Thirumala and establishes the garden for growing flowers for the worship of Lord Srinivasa. Faithfully executing the order of his Guru, Sri Ramanuja. Over time, when Sri Ramanuja visited the hill of Tirumala, he took a holy dip in the Thirukkoneri and adorned himself with Urdhva Pundras. He went around the four Mada Street with all his devotees. At the southwestern corner of the temple, Ananthalvan had laid the garden, which excelled at Devaloka Nandavana (celestial garden) and named it after Ramanuja. The Sri entered the garden and found that the lake, the tank, and the garden were simply of breath-taking beauty and named after himself. Lost in the wonder and at the brilliant work executed by Ananthalvan, the Sri Ramanuja told him “My dear Ananthan Pillai, I have as my disciples so many Vaishnavas who are all Jnana-Putras but only because of you, I feel that there is a glory to me and the Vaishnavas”. He embraced Ananthalvan once again and bestowed all honours on him. Further, Sri Ramanuja asked Ananthalvan for any benediction and Ananthazhwar requested Sri Ramanuja to bless him with the noble spirit to imbibe the teachings of Nammazhwar. Sri Ramanuja accordingly blessed Ananthalvan with the teachings of Nammazhwar, which are known as

Dravida Vedas. Also, it is a well-known fact that the same Sri Ramanuja to fulfil the wishes of his Guru, Yamuancharya, wrote a commentary for the Vedanta Sutra, which was written by Srila Vyasadeva in Sanskrit. The work of Sri Ramanuja is known as Sri Bhasyam.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Vedanta-dvaya-sarajna – One who is completely aware of two Vedantas (Sanskrit and Dravidian (Tamil))," throughout his life, Sri Ramanuja taught his followers both Dravida Vedas, which are compositions of Azhwars and also Vedanta, which are works of Srila Vyasadeva.

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Holy Name 27: Varadambu-pradayaka

Mantra: Om Varadambu-pradayakaya Namah

Meaning – One who daily brought water from a sacred well for the ablutions of Lord Varadaraja and his consort, Goddess Perundevi

Pastime – Due to the enviousness of Sri Ramanuja, who always counter-attacks the Mayavada teachings of Yadava Prakasha. Yadava Prakasha plotted to kill Sri Ramanuja during the Kasi Yatra, which he planned and took Sri Ramanuja and other disciples. After travelling for a long distance for several days, Sri Ramanuja gets to know about the evil plan of Yadava Prakasha. So, he escaped from the trap of Yadava Prakasha, Ramanuja was a stranger to the forests he got lost very soon. He did not know where to go and what to do. In his efforts to escape from Yadava Prakasha, he had run and walked briskly for a very long time. He was exhausted and his legs started aching. As the sun was setting, he decided to rest under a tree for some time and explore the possibilities of finding his way back to Kanchipuram. Ramanuja was terrified when he heard fierce howls and other sounds of animals and birds. However, his fear vanished when he started thinking of the Supreme Lord who was present everywhere, and decided to surrender everything to Him. His exhaustion overpowered him and made him sleep very soon and all his fears vanished. Ramanuja's body was aching all over when he woke up the next morning and he was feeling very hungry. He neither knew how to gather food in the forest nor the way to go back. He was totally confused.

All of a sudden, Ramanuja saw a fowler (Hunter) coming along with His wife towards him from a distance. Seeing the dark complexion and fearful mien of the fowler, Ramanuja became nervous. He could not move from there due to his body pain. The fowler's wife came closer to Ramanuja and said, "You seem to come from a family of worshipful Brahmins. What are you doing here, have you lost your way? Not many people come here even during the time as this place is swarming with wild animals."

Ramanuja’s nervousness vanished after listening to the kind words spoken by the Fowler’s wife. Ramanuja said, “I am from a very distant town called Kanchipuram. We were going on a pilgrimage to the Ganges and I lost my way. I want to go back to Kanchipuram and I don’t know the way.”

The fowler’s wife told Ramanuja that they were going on a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram through Kanchipuram to wash away the sins committed by them and asked Ramanuja to join them till Kanchipuram. Ramanuja became very happy and started thanking the Lord for sending him help in the form of the Fowler and his wife. Seeing Ramanuja’s state, the Fowler brought him some fruits and water. Ramanuja accompanied the Fowler couple after satisfying his hunger with fruits.

Ramanuja could not match the Fowler couple’s pace due to his body pain and therefore, they started walking slowly to ensure that Ramanuja did not stray behind. They walked until evening and then decided to rest for the night. The fowler quickly brought some fruits and water and offered them to Ramanuja. Even as Ramanuja started to eat those fruits, the fowler leveled the ground beneath a tree and prepared the bed for Ramanuja. Ramanuja thanked the Fowler and went to bed after consuming the fruits. Being exhausted due to the day-long tedious trek, Ramanuja went into a deep sleep.

Ramanuja woke up early the following day. At that time, as the fowler’s wife was getting hiccups, he requested Ramanuja to fetch some water for her from the nearby well. Ramanuja, who was grateful to the fowler and his wife for voluntarily offering to guide him to Kanchipuram, brought some water from the well. The fowler’s wife drank it and as it was not sufficient to quench her thirst, Ramanuja had to go to the well for a second time. When he came out of the well, the Fowler and his wife had vanished. Ramanuja searched for them in vain.

Being puzzled at the mysterious disappearance of his guides, Ramanuja started to think of various means to get out of the wilderness. The sun began to rise and he heard the sound of the temple bell at a distance. Ramanuja turned his head towards the source of the sound and, to his surprise; he saw a gigantic temple gopuram that seemed familiar. Ramanuja became happy as he had come closer to civilization. He noticed a wayfarer, who had come to the woods and asked him the name of the town that was visible from there. Being startled at Ramanuja’s query, the wayfarer said, “You have come so close to Kanchipuram, which is believed to be one of the most sacred places on this planet, and you don’t know its name?”

Ramanuja was astonished to know that he had returned to Kanchipuram overnight from a distance that had taken many days for him to reach. Very soon he realized that the fowler and his wife, who had offered to guide him back to Kanchipuram, were none other than the Supreme Lord Varadaraja and His consort, Goddess Perundevi (Mahalakshmi). Ramanuja prostrated in the direction of Lord Varadaraja’s temple to express his gratitude and returned home.

Ramanuja suppressed the actual reason for his returning halfway from the pilgrimage so that his mother wouldn't become apprehensive.

Ramanuja's mother, Bhudevi, who was longing to see her son became very happy to see him and offered her prayers to the Lord by preparing a grand feast. Ramanuja started to study on his own and do some service in Lord Varadaraja's temple.

When Sri Ramanuja narrates the entire episode to Thirukachi Nambi, the associate of Lord Varadaraja, and requests him to appeal to Lord Varadaraja and Goddess Perundevi on his behalf and request for some service to the divine couple. Then Lord Varadaraja assigned the service of fetching water from the well for their services. Accordingly, Sri Ramanuja started to fetch water from the well (from which he had brought water to the fowler's wife who was mother Lakshmi), daily very early in the morning for the Lord's ablutions every day.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Varadambu-pradayaka – One who daily brought water from a sacred well for the ablutions of Lord Varadaraja and his consort, Goddess Perundevi."

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Holy Name 28: Parabhipraya-tattvajna

Mantra: Om Parabhipraya-tattvajnaya Namah

Meaning – One who is an expert in knowing the intention of others

Pastime – In Sri Rangam, after reforming Danurdasa, who was a wrestler, Sri Ramanuja accepted him as his disciple and blessed him with his association. Even though Danurdasa was from a Sudra background, he still received a close association with Sri Ramanuja compared to any other disciples. Many disciples started to envy Danurdasa. As Danurdasa had some wealth he was spending it in the service of his guru. Therefore, those who were envious of Danurdasa started to claim that Ramanuja was very attached to Danurdasa as he had placed all his wealth at Ramanuja's disposal. The claim started gaining momentum as the devotees started to discuss it. One fine day Ramanuja got to know about the propaganda that was being carried out within the ashram and he decided to reform his disciples by making them understand why he liked Danurdasa so much.

One night, when all the disciples in the ashram were fast asleep Ramanuja managed to hide their coupins (loincloths), with the help of some senior disciples. The following day, the disciples finished their baths in the Cauvery as usual and returned to the ashram. When they wanted to change their dresses they were unable to find their coupins. Every disciple started to accuse one or the other disciple of stealing his loincloth. Eventually, the disciples started to fight among themselves for their loincloths. The intensity of the fight was such

that Ramanuja had to intervene to pacify them. Following the plan, one of the senior disciples of Ramanuja returned their coupins and told the disciples, who were fighting among themselves, that he had removed the coupins to clean the ashram while apologizing for not informing about it to them in advance.

After a couple of days, Ramanuja summoned some of the disciples who were spreading the misinformation and said, “I am finding it difficult to find enough resources to manage the ashram as a lot of disciples are staying in the ashram. Moreover, we have to feed every devotee who visits the ashram. Suggest some means to run the ashram.”

All the disciples fell silent as they did not have a reply to Ramanuja’s question. After some time, Ramanuja once again, said, “Danurdasa has a lot of money and he is not willing to spend for the ashram. He just pretends as if he is a great devotee. Why don’t we steal money and jewels from Danurdasa to run the ashram?”

Some of the disciples said, “We are Brahmins of the highest order. How can we steal?”

Ramanuja said, “Parakala became an Alwar just because he went to the extent of stealing for the sake of the Lord. If a Sudra like Parakala can become an Alwar by stealing to construct a temple for the Lord, how can Brahmins like you become thieves if you steal for running the ashram that spreads the message of the Lord?”

After repeated cajoling and assurances of protection from prosecution, if caught in the act of stealing, the devotees agreed to steal money and jewels from Danurdasa’s house. Ramanuja said, “One of you go and tell Danurdasa that I summoned him. He will come running to me and act as if he is very devoted to me. I will engage him in a conversation till you steal every valuable thing from his house and no one will stop you as Danurdasa’s wife would be fast asleep at this hour.”

Following the plan, Ramanuja started to engage Danurdasa in a conversation. The disciples ransacked the entire house and took everything that they found valuable. As Danurdasa’s wife Hemamba was sleeping with a lot of jewels on her, one of the disciples started to remove the jewels carefully from her person to ensure that she did not wake up. Hemamba, who was awake and aware of everything that the disciples were doing, turned to the other side as soon as a disciple finished removing the jewels from one side of her body. The disciples panicked thinking that they had woken up Hemamba and ran back to the ashram with whatever they had gathered. Ramanuja asked Danurdasa to go back to his house as soon as he saw the disciples returning to the ashram.

Ramanuja summoned the disciples who were deputed to steal money and other things from Danurdasa’s house as soon as Danurdasa left the ashram premises

and asked them if they were successful in their mission. The disciples told Ramanuja that they ransacked the entire house and that they had to run back to the ashram as Danurdasa's wife woke up when they were trying to remove the jewels from her person. Ramanuja said, "You have done a wonderful job. Did she see you?" The disciple replied, "We don't know." Ramanuja said, "If she has seen you people stealing from her house, she might tell everyone in the town and that will spoil your reputation and the reputation of the ashram. Stealthily follow Danurdasa and listen to whatever his wife tells him as soon as he reaches home. That will help us know if she has seen you or identified you. We will plan our future course of action based on that."

The disciples stealthily followed Danurdasa to his house as directed by Ramanuja. The disciples stopped by the side of the window to see if Danurdasa's wife complains to him against them for trying to steal jewels from her person. As soon as Danurdasa entered the house Hemamba received him and inquired from him about the well-being of Ramanuja. As the entire house was in a mess, Danurdasa asked his wife about it. Hemamba said, "I don't know how you will react to whatever has happened. Some of our worshipful guru's disciples had come to the house and they ransacked everything. After taking whatever they could lay their hands upon they started removing the jewelry on me. As I turned my body to the other side they panicked and ran away."

Danurdasa said, "You are a foolish lady. My guru's disciples are Vaishnavas of the highest order and are great devotees. They would not have come to steal unless they needed money for some good cause or the service of the Lord. Why did you scare them away by moving your body? You should have allowed them to take whatever they wanted."

Hemamba said, "In fact, I turned to the other side thinking that it might help them remove the jewels from the other side of the body and I did not have any intentions of scaring them away. Let us hand over the jewels to them tomorrow on some of the other pretexts as that would help them do whatever they want to do with it."

Danurdasa agreed with his wife's suggestion and went to bed praising his wife for understanding the Vaishnavas and his guru in the right spirit. The disciples went back to the ashram and narrated everything that transpired between Danurdasa and his wife to Ramanuja. Ramanuja smilingly reminded the disciples about the uproar caused by them when they could not find their coupins a couple of days ago. Ramanuja said, "You thought that I am being partial to Danurdasa just because he has a lot of money and spends it for me. I had to do this to make you understand how detached and advanced Danurdasa is. He might be a man of a lower caste, but a true Vaishnava is above all material designations like caste and class. Danurdasa is a true Vaishnava. Therefore, I like him."

The disciples felt ashamed for having misunderstood their guru and spent the entire night regretting their mistakes. The following day, Danurdasa and his wife,

Hemamba, came to the ashram with their jewels to give them to the devotees who had gone to their house to steal the jewels. Some senior disciples narrated everything that had happened and handed over Danurdasa's belongings that were stolen under Ramanuja's instructions the previous night back to them. Since then all the disciples in the ashram started respecting Danurdasa. Very soon Danurdasa donated all the wealth that was in his possession and started to live by the side of the temple and serve Lord Ranganatha till he was in this material world.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Parabhipraya-tattvajna – One who is an expert in knowing the intention of others," in this case, he was able to understand the envious intention of his other disciples towards Danurdasa. So, he acted in such an expert way that, all other disciples understood the reality and repented for the same.

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Holy Name 29: Yamunanguli-mokshaka

Mantra: Om Yamunanguli-mokshakaya Namah

Meaning – One who straightened the three folded fingers of Sri Yamunacharya, by taking a vow to fulfil his three unfulfilled spiritual desires

Pastime – In Sri Rangam, Sri Yamunacharya after propagating Vaishnavism for several decades, understood that his time as come to disappear, so he called his disciple Mahapurna (Periya Nambi) and sent him to get Sri Ramanuja at the earliest. Periya Nambi immediately started to Kanchipuram to bring Sri Ramanuja to Sri Rangam.

Mahapurna was so eager to get back to the presence of his guru that he reached Kanchipuram in four days without stopping anywhere except for meals and brief rests. It was late at night when he reached Kanchipuram. Therefore, he went to Kanchipurna's kuteeram rested for the night, and revealed the purpose of his visit to Kanchipurna. Kanchipurna became very happy to know of Yamunacharya's desire to have Ramanuja in his fold.

The following day, Ramanuja was fetching water for the Lord's ablutions from the pond that was situated beside the Sal tree. Kanchipurna asked Mahapurna to approach Ramanuja and tell him the purpose of his visit. As it was getting late for Kanchipurna to go to Lord Varadaraja's fanning service, he hastened to the temple. Ramanuja became very happy after he came to know about Yamunacharya's instructions. Ramanuja left for Sri Rangam along with Mahapurna immediately without even informing his wife. When Mahapurna asked Ramanuja if he had made necessary arrangements for the subsistence of his family in his absence, Ramanuja said, "Vaishnava's service is more important than serving the family." Mahapurna considered himself blessed to have seen such a detached devotee.

Yamunacharya had briefly recovered from his illness and had returned from Lord Ranganatha's temple after having darshan. He instructed his disciples to summon all the grihastha (householder) disciples as he wanted to speak to them. When all of them arrived, Yamunacharya, with folded hands, said, "Please forgive me if I have knowingly or unknowingly committed any sins or offended you in any manner. Though I did not intend to hurt any of you, I was harsh on some of you due to my concern for you and to guide you on the right path."

All the disciples, who had gathered there, could not bear to see their spiritual master in an apologetic mood. They fell at Yamunacharya's feet and requested him not to speak like that as he was sinless and too enlightened to commit any mistakes. Yamunacharya asked Thiruvaranga Perumal Ariyar to take care of all the disciples in his absence and once again asked all his disciples to surrender themselves to Lord Ranganatha. Yamunacharya requested his disciples to spend their lives in the Lord's service and retired to his quarters and all the grihastha disciples left the ashram. The other disciples of Yamunacharya started to sing the glories of the Lord.

After some time, Yamunacharya sat in a padmasana pose and started to focus on the Lord. Being a master of Ashtanga-Yoga, Yamunacharya regulated his life breath and focused all his cognitive faculties between his eyebrows and became very blissful. After being in that state for some time he quit his mortal body through the crown of his head (sushumna nadi) even as his disciples were seeing him. Some senior disciples realized what was happening as soon as the crown of Yamunacharya's head burst open and they started to cry loudly. Very soon everyone in Sri Rangam got to know about Yamunacharya's disappearance and flocked to his ashram to have a glimpse of his remains.

The whole of Sri Rangam was immersed in grief and all the devotees had gathered in Yamunacharya's ashram. Some senior disciples started to prepare Yamunacharya's body for enshrining it in a samadhi according to tradition by giving it a ceremonial bath. All the disciples took Yamunacharya's body in procession towards Collidum for enshrining it. Mahapurna and Ramanuja reached the outskirts of Sri Rangam after crossing river Cauvery and started to go towards Yamunacharya's ashram. They saw a procession coming towards them and asked one of the passers-by about it. The man, with tears in his eyes, replied, "Mother Earth has lost its most precious jewel today as the great sage Yamunacharya, who was the guiding light of thousands of devotees, quit his body. They are carrying his body in procession for enshrining it on the banks of Collidum."

Ramanuja fainted as soon as he heard about Yamunacharya's disappearance and Mahapurna started to cry beating his forehead and for not being by the side of Yamunacharya when he quit his body. Mahapurana was so shocked that he felt like committing suicide. He remembered Lord Ranganatha's instructions not to commit suicide and consoled himself. Seeing Ramanuja lying unconscious,

Mahpurna sprinkled some water and woke him up. Mahapurna started to console Ramanuja who was crying inconsolably. The procession came close to Mahapurna after stopping at some important places for the devotees to have a glimpse of Yamunacharya's body. Seeing Mahapurna, the devotees lowered the palanquin to enable him to see Yamunacharya. Mahapurna fell at Yamunacharya's feet and started to drench it with his tears. Ramanuja noticed that three fingers of Yamunacharya's right hand were folded and asked the assembled devotees if Yamunacharya's fingers were always folded like that due to some debility when he was alive. After the devotees told Ramanuja that Yamunacharya did not have any such debility, Ramanuja asked them if he had any desires.

Some of the senior disciples told Ramanuja that Yamunacharya was hankering for three things during his lifetime.

1. He always wanted someone to write a commentary on Brahma-Sutras, the aphorisms compiled by Veda-Vyasa to help the inquisitive understand the nature of the Supreme Lord and the means to attain Him, following the Vaishnava philosophy.

2. Yamunacharya wanted to honour Nammalwar by writing a commentary on Thiruvaymozhi and by preserving the works of the Alwars.

3. He also wanted to honour Parashara-Muni, the author of Vishnu Purana, which clearly describes the nature of the Lord and His relationship with the embodied and liberated souls, and Veda-Vyasa, who systematically classified the four Vedas and composed Mahabharata for the benefit of mankind.

As soon as Ramanuja promised to write a commentary on Brahma Sutras, one of the folded fingers of Yamunacharya straightened to the astonishment of all the devotees who had gathered there. Ramanuja said, "I will ensure that commentary is written on Thiruvaymozhi and shall name two worthy people after Parashara-Muni and Veda Vyasa to honour them."

The other two fingers of Yamunacharya that were folded became straight as soon as Ramanuja uttered these words. Ramanuja stood for some time gazing at the most sacred form of a great Vaishnava acharya and decided to return without even waiting for Yamunacharya's samadhi rituals. When someone asked Ramanuja to have a darshan of Lord Ranganatha before leaving for Kanchipuram, Ramanuja said, "I do not want to see that cruel Lord of yours as He took away Yamunacharya even before I could meet him," and left for Kanchipuram.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Yamunanguli-mokshaka – One who straightened the three folded fingers of Sri Yamunacharya, by taking a vow to fulfil his three unfulfilled spiritual desires."

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Holy Name 30: Devarajakrupalabdha-Shadvaakyaartha-Mahodadhah

Mantra: Om Devarajakrupalabdha-Shadvaakyaartha-Mahodadhaye Namah

Meaning – By the grace of Lord Varadaraja (Devaraja), he (Ramanuja) obtained the answers to six questions (which he asked Lord Varadaraja), these questions and answers are like the vast ocean of meanings and understandings

Pastime – After the disappearance of Sri Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja was unable to find a suitable guru, and in a great dilemma, Sri Ramanuja became very anxious and he had some doubts about some philosophical conclusions. Therefore, he decided to get them clarified by the Lord through Kanchipurna. Sri Ramanuja approached Kanchipurna with folded hands and said, “Sir, I have some doubts about philosophy and I am insecure about my spiritual life as I have not found a suitable guru till now. Please request the Lord to clarify my doubts and ask Him to guide me to a suitable guru.” Though Sri Ramanuja did not reveal to Kanchipurna his doubts, during that time Sri Ramanuja had 6 questions in his mind, Kanchipurna told him that he would request the Lord to clarify his doubts without knowing what they were as the Lord was omniscient. The following day, Kanchipurna came to Sri Ramanuja and said, “I told the Lord about your doubts and, in reply, the Lord said:

- I am the Supreme Brahman and the primordial cause of everything.
- The souls live in Me and their relationship with Me is that of a master and servant, son and father, etc.
- Surrendering oneself completely to Me is the easiest means of liberation.
- A surrendered soul would be liberated at the end of his life even if he does not remember My name.
- A self-surrendered soul will attain My abode immediately after he quits his body.
- Take refuge in Mahapurna, the disciple of Yamunacharya, as he has all the qualifications to become an ideal guru.

As soon as Kanchipurna finished passing the Lord’s message, Sri Ramanuja began to dance like a madman as these doubts were bothering him for a very long time. He prostrated in the direction of Lord Varadaraja’s temple to thank Him and clasped Kanchipurna’s lotus feet tightly. Sri Ramanuja said, “Sir you are such an elevated soul and you are the voice of the Lord. One would be sanctified just by having your darshan, please bless me.” Sri Ramanuja after he got the order from Lord Varadaraja, began his journey towards Sri Rangam, and on the way he met with Mahapurna at Madhurantakam and got initiated by him with the

blessings of Kanchipurna and Lord Varadaraja. After this, he returned to Kanchipuram and continued to live by serving Lord Varadaraja.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Devarajakrupalabdha-Shadvaakyaartha-Mahodadhah – By the grace of Lord Varadaraja (Devaraja), he (Ramanuja) obtained the answers to six questions (which he asked Lord Varadaraja), these questions and answers are like the vast ocean of meanings and understandings.”

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Holy Name 31: Poornaaryalabdha-Sanmantrah

Mantra: Om Poornaaryalabdha-Sanmantraaya Namah

Meaning - One who obtained the divine mantra (Thiru-mantram) from his preceptor Poornaarya (Mahapoorna or Periya Nambi)

Pastime – After the disappearance of Sri Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja received Kanchi Varadaraja's divine order through Tirukachi Nambi, based on the order Sri Ramanuja set forth for Sri Rangam to become the disciple of Periya Nambi. On the other hand, as per the wish of Sri Yamanucharya and other Vaishnavas, Periya Nambi was on his way to Kanchipuram to meet Sri Ramanuja and teach him the principles of Vaishnavism and Vedic literatures. Sri Ramanuja wanted to meet Periya Nambi and he started from Kanchipuram, while Periya Nambi started from Sri Rangam. They both met at Maduranthakam temple (Present-day Eri-Katha Rama Temple). During this, Sri Ramanuja told about the divine order of Lord Varadaraja, Periya Nambi immediately accepted the order of the Lord, but still, he informed Sri Ramanuja that, he would initiate him after some time or after reaching Kanchipuram. Usually, the Guru tests the disciple before giving him or her the initiation. Understanding this, Sri Ramanuja expressed the uncertainty of this world and asked him to accept him as his disciple right away. Pleased by the seriousness of Sri Ramanuja, Periya Nambi performs the initiation ceremony right away. So in the month of Avani, on the Sukla Panchami, Periya Nambi gave the Samasrayanam or Pancha Samskaram known as Dvaya Mantropadesam (divine syllable). Sri Ramanuja obtained Pancha Samskara from Periya Nambi in the four-pillared halls around the sanctum of Lord Rama Temple. This is the only place where Ramanuja can be seen as a Grihastha (family man). The silver shanku and chakra used for this purpose can be seen even today at the shrine of Ramanuja in the Rama temple in Madurantakam.

After this, Sri Ramanuja took Periya Nambi and his wife to Kanchipuram as he wanted to learn Divya Prabhandam and Vyasa Sutras from him. He arranged a house for the couple and looked after their daily needs.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Poornaaryalabdha-Sanmantrah - One who obtained the divine mantra (Thiru-mantram) from his preceptor Poornaarya (Mahapoorna or Periya Nambi).”

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Holy Name 32: Shouripaadaabja Shatpadah

Mantra: Om Shouripaadaabja Shatpadaaya Namah

Meaning – One who is like a bee, who always meditating on the lotus feet of Lord Sri Shouriraja (Sri Krishna, who has a beautiful tuft of hair)

Pastime – Thirukannapuram is the abode of Lord Sowriraja Perumal. Azhwars and Acharyas served and glorified Lord Sowriraja Perumal and were mesmerized by his beauty. Once the local king of Thirukannapuram used to send a lot of flowers for the Lord of Thirukannapuram. The Shri Ranga Bhattar, the head priest of the Thirukannapuram temple, used to hand over the Prasadam garlands of the Lord to his wife every day. Very rarely any important people will visit the temple to receive the prasadam garland.

One day, when the king made a surprise visit during that time Lord's flower is removed and he gave the same to his wife and Shri Ranga Bhattar arranging for Lord to sleep. But Shri Ranga Bhattar, when he saw the king, immediately went to his wife and took the garland back from her, and with the same garland, he received the king. But, when Shri Ranga Bhattar's wife gave it, a strand of her hair got entangled in the garland. When Shri Ranga Bhattar offered the garland to the King, he was surprised to see the hair in it and he asked Shri Ranga Bhattar, whether the Lord is having a tuft on His head. Shri Ranga Bhattar maintained that the flowers came after adorning the Lord and there was a tuft on His head. The king wanted to examine the deity the next day because that day already Lord's deity was already placed for resting. The Shri Ranga Bhattar was in a fix, he repented for his mistake and prayed to the Lord to save him. The next day, when the king visited the temple, he could see hair (sowri) on the Lord's head! Such was the Lord's kindness to the devotee who had completely surrendered to him. From that day onwards the Lord was called Sowrirajan, meaning – "One who has a beautiful tuft".

There are several prefixes for the word Sowri. It means one who is present in all the Yugas. It is believed that in the temple of Thirukannapuram, which has seen 75 Chatur Yugas, Sowri also means beauty and the Lord is so beautiful, that He is appropriately named Sowrirajan. But in the case of Shri Ranga Bhattar, Lord saved his devotee and with that, he also got his name Sowrirajan.

Sri Ramanuja travelled across the country to visit the holy abode of Lord Vishnu, especially the abodes which were sung by Azhwars in their compositions. After visiting the holy abode, he will stay and serve the deity and temple, establish the proper worship process, improve the economic situation, etc… During these services to each holy abode of Lord Vishnu, Sri Ramanuja came to Thirukannapuram and stayed there to serve the deity and temple, then he was mesmerized by the beauty of Lord Sowriraja and lost his heart at his lotus feet.

Even though, Sri Ramanuja travelled to several holy places and mostly resided at Sri Rangam, still, his heart always meditated on the lotus feet of Lord Sri Shouriraja at Thirukannapuram. Due to this, Sri Ramanuja is known as “Shouripaadaabja Shatpadah – One who is like a bee, who always meditating on the lotus feet of Lord Sri Shouriraja (Sri Krishna, who has a beautiful tuft of hair).”

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Holy Name 33: Tridhandadhaari

Mantra: Om Tridhandadhaarine Namah

Meaning - One who holds the triple staff (Tridanda)

Pastime – Vaduga Nambi, who is the personal servant of Sri Ramanuja, wrote a scripture glorifying the life and teachings of Sri Ramanuja named Yathiraja Vaibhavam. In that scripture, he mentions that Sri Ramanuja was worshipped and accompanied by 700 sannyasis, 12000 Vaishnava disciples, and many more Vaishnavas. He always adored with Saffron robes, Sacred thread and Tridanda. With these things, when Sri Ramanuja walks on the street of Sri Rangam, it reminds the people of Sri Rangam that, Sri Ramanuja is not only an ordinary Yati, but he is the King of Yatis (Sannyasis).

Hearing about the position of Sri Ramanuja and his glories, which were spread far and wide, was observed by Chola King Kirimikanda, who was maddened by the Shaivate philosophy and personification of envy, summoned Sri Ramanuja to his court by sending his soldiers. Understanding the situation, Sri Ramanuja’s disciple Kuratazhwar took up the Saffron robes and Tridanda of Sri Ramanuja wore the same and went to the court of the Chola King. Meanwhile, Sri Ramanuja, who was adored with white cloth and without Tridanda moved out of Sri Rangam and reached present-day Karnataka region, which was out of Chola King’s influence.

After residing in a few places, Sri Ramanuja arrived at Thondanur, where he decided to change back to his Saffron robes and Tridanda. So, in Thondanur there is a temple of Lord Yoga Narasimha on top of a hillock, where Sri Ramanuja worshipped the lotus feet of Lord Yoga Narasimha and offered a white dress for Lordship, and further, he accepted the new saffron robes and Tridanda by touching the same to the lotus feet of Lord Yoga Narasimha. In that way, Sri Ramanuja adored himself back to his Sannyasa attire, which is with Saffron robes and Tridanda. To commemorate this, Lord Yoga Narasimha in Thondanur will be adored with a white dress, and also with the danda (stick), which is in the hand of Lord Yoga Narasimha and is used for the blessing of the pilgrims. Further, in Thondanur, Sri Ramanuja influenced Thondanur Nambi, King Bittideva and thousands of Jain followers, and brought them to the Vaishnavism fold.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Tridhandadhaari - One who holds the triple staff (Tridanda).”

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Holy Name 34: Brahmajnani

Mantra: Om Brahmajnanaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the knower of Brahman (Supreme Lord Narayana)

Pastime – Once when Sri Ramanuja went out on his daily rounds of begging, a group of boys who were playfully worshipping Sri Ranganatha by drawing His image in the sand showed the image to Ramanuja and asked him to worship the Lord. Ramanuja kept his begging bowl aside and offered his obeisance to the image and worshipped the image as he would worship Lord Ranganatha every day. The onlookers were stunned at Ramanuja's attitude and started to compare him to Prahlada, who could see Lord Narayana everywhere and in everything. On another occasion, some boys playfully offered some sand to Lord Ranganatha's image and started to distribute the same amongst themselves as prasadam. One of the boys gave the same to Ramanuja who devotedly put it into his mouth to the astonishment of those who were present. These two incidents highlight the intensity of Ramanuja's devotion to the Lord and that he was accessible even to small kids despite being a great scholar. Further, Sri Ramanuja being a great scholar and devotee, was well aware that, the Supreme Lord is the Supreme Brahman who pervads everywhere with his energy, but still maintains his individuality. So, the sand image of Lord Ranganatha, which was drawn by kids, is also potent enough to be worshipped.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Brahmajnani – One who is the knower of Brahman (Supreme Lord Narayana)."

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Holy Name 35: Brahmadhyaana-paraayanah

Mantra: Om Brahmadhyaana-paraayanaaya Namah

Meaning - One who is always engrossed in the contemplation or meditation of the highest (Brahman or Supreme Lord Narayana) as the ultimate path

Pastime – On one occasion, standing outside Periya Nambi's house in Sri Rangam and watching his daughter Attulai opening the door to offer madhukaram (Food), Sri Ramanuja, lost in thought, prostrated before her, imagining her to be the reincarnation of Andal. Periya Nambi, who was watching all this came out and asked Sri Ramanuja, "Undhu Mathagalithan Anusanthanamo?" (Were you thinking of the 18th pasuram (Verse) of Thiruppavai.)

Thiruppavai 18th verse,

undu madha kalittan odada tol valiyan
nanda gopalan marumahale! nappinnay
gandham kamazhum kuzhali! kaḍai tiravay
vandengum kozhiyazhaittana kan! madhavi
pandal mel palkal kuyil inangal kuvina kan
pandar virali! un maittunan per pada
centamarai kaiyal cirar vaḷai olippa
vandu tiravay makizhndelor empavay

Meaning: Oh daughter-in-law of King Nandagopa, who has the proud gait of elephants and who is known for His valiant shoulders with invincible strength (that he would never leave a battle field without victory). Oh, Nappinnai (Goddess Nila-devi) with enchanting fragrant black tresses! Kindly unlock your door. Hearken, the cocks have awakened now everywhere and are making loud noises. Hearken, even the group of cuckoos, sitting on the bower of Maadhavi (Kurukkatthi) flowers, have cooed gently many times. Oh, Young Lady holding the sporting ball with Your fingers as Bhogopakaranam! As we wish to sing about Your Lord's holy names, please come with joy and open the door with Your red lotus-like soft hands, which create a pleasant sound from the movement of your bracelets adorning your forearms.

Further, Thiruvaimozhi, 10.8.3 Pashuram has a very interesting anecdote. Once Sri Ramanuja, while walking in his math meditating on Thiruvaimozhi verses, suddenly turns back. Embar (Govinda Perumal, who is also Sri Ramanuja's cousin) watches him from behind the doors and asks if Sri Ramanuja, is thinking about "madiththen" in this Pasuram (10.8.3 verse) and Sri Ramanuja acknowledges that. Just based on a simple act of Sri Ramanuja, Embar (Govinda Perumal) was able to determine exactly what Sri Ramanuja was thinking.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Brahmadhyaana-paraayanah - One who is always engrossed in the contemplation or meditation of the highest (Brahman or Supreme Lord Narayana) as the ultimate path," even for a moment he was not thinking about anything, which is not related to Supreme Lord Narayana.

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Holy Name 36: Rangesha-Kainkaryarathah

Mantra: Om Rangesha-Kainkaryarathaaya Namah

Meaning - One who delights in the service of the Lord Ranganatha

Pastime – After the disappearance of Sri Yamunacharya, on the order of Lord Varadaraja, Sri Ramanuja accepted Mahapurna as his Guru. Further, due to the sequence of incidents in his family life, Sri Ramanuja accepted the renounced order of life and started to spend most of his time worshipping or contemplating the glories of the Supreme Lord in Kanchipuram. Sri Ramanuja's nephew,

Dasarathi, became his disciple and started to serve him. Everyone in Kanchipuram used to admire Ramanuja and gather around him whenever he used to discuss scriptures with Kanchipurna and Dasarathi. The news of Ramanuja accepting Sannyasa from Lord Varadaraja started to spread and people from distant places started to flock around Ramanuja to listen to his profound talks. Ramanuja had become so popular that even Yadava Prakasha's mother had come to see him.

Very soon the disciples of Yamunacharya at Sri-Rangam got to know about Ramanuja accepting sannyasa. As the disciples in the monastery established by Yamunacharya were eagerly looking for a good guide, Mahapurna and other disciples wanted to bring Ramanuja to Sri-Rangam. However, they were reluctant to request him to come to Sri Rangam as he was very devoted to Lord Varadaraja. Therefore, they prayed to Lord Ranganatha and requested Him to bring Ramanuja to Sri-Rangam to look after the legacy established by Yamunacharya. Lord Ranganatha spoke through his priest and said, "Ramanuja will not even step out of Kanchipuram without the permission of Lord Varadaraja and the Lord to is attached to him. Therefore, send Vararanga to Kanchipuram and ask him to try and appease the Lord with his melodious songs. When Lord Varadaraja asks him to seek a boon let Vararanga ask Lord Varadaraja to send Ramanuja to Sri-Rangam."

Following Lord Ranganatha's advice, Mahapurna and others deputed Vararanga, a very good devotee and a great singer, to bring Ramanuja to Sri Rangam. Vararanga reached Kanchipuram and with the blessings of Kanchipurna, started to serve Lord Varadaraja and sing the glories of the Lord melodiously with devotion whenever he got an opportunity to do so. Being pleased with Vararanga's services, Lord Varadaraja offered him a boon through Kanchipurna. Vararanga became very happy as soon as Kanchipurna told him about Lord Varadaraja's benediction. Vararanga immediately requested the Lord to send Ramanuja to Sri-Rangam to carry forward the legacy of Yamunacharya. As Lord Varadaraja was very fond of Ramanuja He was reluctant to send Ramanuja and started to repent for having offered boons without any foresight. Lord Varadaraja once again asked Vararanga if he would ask for anything other than sending Ramanuja to Sri-Rangam and Vararanga was not willing to ask for anything else. As Lord Varadaraja had already given His word He asked Kanchipurna to tell Ramanuja about whatever happened. As soon as Kanchipurna told everything to Ramanuja, he offered his obeisance to Lord Varadaraja and left for Sri-Rangam along with Vararanga.

Earlier, when Ramanuja had visited Sri Rangam he did not have the darshan of Lord Ranganatha as he was angry with the Lord for taking Yamunacharya away from this planet. However, this time, Ramanuja first went to the temple after reaching Sri Rangam and had the darshan of Lord Ranganatha before going to Yamunacharya's monastery. Some of the senior disciples of Yamunacharya including Mahapurna, Thiruvaranga Perumal Ariyar, and Dasharathi entrusted

Ramanuja with the responsibility of taking care of the Matha. Then onwards Sri Ramanuja was completely immersed in the services of Lord Ranganatha.

In Sri Rangam, Sri Ramanujacharya personally administers the services to the deities, especially Lord Ranganatha and Goddess Sri Ranga Nayaki. Once Sri Ramanujacharya after completing his daily rituals went to have darshan of Lord Ranganatha, the predominating deity of Sri Rangam temple, by seeing the deity's face, Sri Ramanujacharya states, "There appears weakness of fever in the face of Lord Ranganatha. And he immediately asked his servants (or head priests) about the recent offerings to Lord Ranganatha." His servants responded by stating, "They offered Curd Rice." Sri Ramanujacharya contemplated, "Offering Curd Rice will not cause fever." Further, he asked for other items, and they stated, "They offered Blackberries (Naga Palam)." Again, Sri Ramanujacharya contemplated, "Offering Blackberries (Naga Palam) will not cause fever." Then he asked his servants do they offered both Curd Rice and Blackberries (Naga Palam) together. For which, they stated, "Yes." Then, Sri Ramanujacharya understood the cause of the weakness of fever on Lord Ranganatha's face, he states, "When both Curd Rice and Blackberries (Naga Palam) offered together will cause fever, so he ordered that next time onwards not to repeat it." So, to cure Lord Ranganatha's fever, he personally administered the special herbs and offered them to Lord Ranganatha. After that, Lord Ranganatha got rid of weakness.

When Acharyas comments on this incident, they state that "Sri Ramanujacharya, who is a commentator of Vedanta Sutra very well knows that, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Brahman is "Avyaya – One who is inexhaustible or One whose personality never deteriorates," still, Sri Ramanujacharya's this special act and service to Lord Ranganatha shows his special love for his beloved deity, Lord Ranganatha. When transcendental love for Supreme Lord overrules the mere knowledge of Vedanta." Further, Lord Ranganatha being the supreme brahman never gets fever or weakness, but his reciprocation with his dear devotee, Sri Ramanujacharya, is a transcendental loving exchange. Also, accepting the incarnation of the deity (Archavatra), the Supreme Lord becomes completely dependent on his servants or worshippers, and for any mistake, they make in the worship, the Lord will not protest, he accepts everything and be under their mercy, that is the special mood of Lord in his deity incarnation. Sometimes he shows signs of hunger, fever, thirst, etc… as a special reciprocation with his dear devotees, but actually, he is beyond all these things as mentioned in the Vedic scriptures. This is well-known to Sri Ramanujacharya.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Rangesha-Kainkaryarathah - One who delights in the service of the Lord Ranganatha."

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Holy Name 37: Vibhoothidvaya Nayakah

Mantra: Om Vibhoothidvaya Naayakaaya Namah

Meaning - One who is the Lord of the twin divine realms (Leelavibhuti – the realm of divine play and Nityavibhuti – the eternal realm)

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja, who is an incarnation of Adisesha, appeared in this world on the order of Lord Narayana, to deliver the conditioned souls. After the disappearance of Sri Yamunacharya, as per Yamunacharya's desire, his disciples brought Sri Ramanuja from Kanchipuram to Sri Rangam to take over the Sampradaya. When Sri Ramanuja came to Sri Rangam, Lord Ranaganatha was very pleased and with great affection, he called Sri Ramanuja and blessed him by stating, "Now onwards both Leelavibhuti – the realm of divine play and Nityavibhuti – the eternal realm, will be under your command. Whoever surrenders to you or whoever is recommended by you they will get liberation". After this incident, Sri Ramanuja continued his services for Lord Ranganatha and other holy abodes. To show the world that, Sri Ramanuja has the command over both the realm (Leela and Nitya), the Lord enacted a pastime.

In Melukote there lived a person named, Ezhilisai Empiran, who was a poet and musician who composed sankirtans in praise of Lord Cheluva Narayana in Melukote, Karnataka. Daily Lord Cheluva Narayana used to dance while listening to his songs, Ezhilisai Empiran began showing an offensive attitude towards others with arrogance, especially against Sri Ramanujacharya and always disrespected him. When Sri Ramanuja visited Thirunarayanapuram, Ezhilisai Empiran did not treat him properly. Sri Ramanuja wanted to transform his heart, so he sent his disciples to Ezhilisai Empiran to ask him whether Lord Vishnu would grant his Guru Sri Ramanuja liberation as informed by Sri Ramanuja, the disciples requested Ezhilisai Empiran to ask Lord Cheluva Narayana about the same and Ezhilisai Empiran's ego further boosted, because the disciples of Sri Ramanujacharya is asking him about their Guru's liberation means, he is greater than Sri Ramanujacharya. Ezhilisai Empiran kept this very much in his mind and when his service of singing for Lord Cheluva Narayana was done, he immediately asked Lord Cheluva Narayana, to which the deity replied that Sri Ramanuja is capable of giving liberation to others and hence can gain the same later and whoever surrenders to his lotus feet, they all surely will get liberation and attain my eternal abode.

Ezhilisai Empiran came and informed the disciples of Sri Ramanujacharya about the same, during then the disciples asked him back, whether he asked about his liberation. Ezhilisai Empiran became very much offended and said "When I sing, Lord Cheluva Narayana personally dances, where is the question of liberation will not be granted for me? There is no question about this, I will surely get liberation." Sri Ramanujacharya's disciple asked him to get it confirmed by Lord Cheluva Narayana. Ezhilisai Empiran even though arrogantly confident, still wants to get it confirmed with the Lord Cheluva Narayana. The next day after his singing service to Lord Cheluva Narayana, he requested Lord Cheluva Narayana to grant him liberation. To teach him a lesson, Lord Cheluva Narayana refused,

saying that Sri Ramanujacharya was the only capable one to do so. Ezhilisai Empiran was shocked by the words of Lord Cheluva Narayana and pleaded Lord by saying, “Oh Lord, I served you my entire life, I sang sankirtan for you and you danced for the Sankirtan”, The Lord Cheluva Narayana keeping in mind to purify Sri Ezhilisai Empiran told that, “Oh Ezhilisai Empiran, for my pleasure you did Sankirtan and for your satisfaction, I danced for that, our business is over. If you need liberation, go and surrender to the Lotus feet of Sri Ramanujacharya” Ezhilisai Empiran realized his mistake and his attitude, immediately he went and surrendered to Sri Ramanujacharya and became his disciple. Slowly he came out of his offensive behaviour and served the lotus feet of Sri Ramanujacharya and other Vaishnavas got liberation and went to the abode of Lord Vishnu, Nityavibhuti – the eternal realm, to serve him eternally.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Vibhoothidvaya Nayakah - One who is the Lord of the twin divine realms (Leelavibhuti – the realm of divine play and Nityavibhuti – the eternal realm).”

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Holy Name 38: Gosthipurna-krpalabdha-mantra-rajaprakasakah

Mantra: Om Gosthipurna-krpalabdha-mantra-rajaprakasakaya Namah

Meaning – One who obtained the divine mantra (Ashtakshari) by the grace of Thirukosthiyur Nambi and openly revealed the same to the world

Pastime – In Sri Rangam, once Mahapurna asked his disciple Sri Ramanuja to go to Ghostipuram which is around 65 miles away from Sri Rangam, and learn the most sacred Ashtakshari Mantra from Ghostipurna, one of the senior-most disciples of Yamunacharya. Being impressed with Ghostipurna’s devotion, Yamunacharya had revealed the Ashtakshari Mantra to Ghostipurana and had asked him not to reveal it to the undeserving as it was believed to be the most sacred mantra and the essence of scriptures. Ramanuja walked to Ghostipuram to meet Ghostipurana. Ramanuja offered his obeisance to Ghostipurna and introduced himself. Ramanuja requested Ghostipurna to teach him the sacred Ashtakshari Mantra and its esoteric meanings. Ghostipurna told Ramanuja that he was not in a position to do so and asked him to come again. Ramanuja walked to Ghostipuram sixteen times just to learn the mantra and each time Ghostipurna sent him back without teaching the mantra by giving some excuse to test him. During his seventeenth visit, Ghostipurna told Ramanuja that he would reveal the mantra on his next visit and asked him to come alone. However, Ramanuja took his nephew Dasarathi and his dearest disciple Kuresha along with him when he went to see Ghostipurna.

Seeing Dasarathi and Kuresha along with Ramanuja, Ghostipurna, in a stern voice, said, “I had asked you to come lonely. Why did you bring these two people along with you?”

Ramanuja replied, “Sir, Dasarathi is like my staff and Kuresha is like my sacred thread. How can I live without them?”

Ghostipurna asked Dasarathi and Kuresha to stay back and took Ramanuja to a secluded place. After Ramanuja promised not to reveal the sacred mantra to the undeserving and to reveal the mantra to a devotee only after completely testing him, Ghostipurna revealed the sacred mantra to him. Ramanuja offered his obeisance to Ghostipurna and started for Sri-Rangam. On the way, Ramanuja climbed the tallest gopuram of Lord Sowmya Narayana Perumal Temple in Ghostipuram and loudly said, “Listen, everybody, I will reveal the most sacred Ashtakshari Mantra, which is considered to be the essence of scriptures and has the efficacy to deliver one from this material world. Please come here as fast as possible. This mantra is the king of all the mantras and is not revealed easily to everyone. Even the great yogis had to perform severe penances to learn it. Learn this mantra and get liberated.”

Immediately a lot of people from the town gathered around the temple and Ramanuja revealed to everyone, irrespective of their caste, class, and all other material differences. Ramanuja loudly said, “The sacred mantra is Om Namo Narayanaya! Chant it regularly and you will be liberated.”

Thus, Ramanuja started the tradition of revealing the sacred mantra to everyone from the top of the gopuram.

Ghostipurna became furious after he came to know that Ramanuja had breached his promise by revealing the most sacred mantra to everyone in the town. He summoned Ramanuja to his presence. Ramanuja came to Ghostipurna’s presence with folded hands and offered obeisance to him. Ghostipurna, who was fuming with anger said, “At the time of receiving the mantra from my spiritual master Yamunacharya, I had promised him that I would never reveal it to the undeserving and to those who do not respect the traditions. I have sinned by revealing the mantra to you. You had promised not to reveal the mantra to anyone and how did you breach the promise? Do you know the consequences of your actions?”

Ramanuja humbly said, “My dear sir, you have every right to do whatever you want with me. However, many people who heard this mantra would be liberated from this cycle of birth and death. I don’t mind going to hell to liberate these people who do not understand the importance of spiritual lives. If people like us do not enlighten them, they will never understand the greatness of surrendering to the Supreme Lord and they can never overcome this never-ending cycle of birth and death.”

Ghostipurna was moved by Ramanuja’s answer and he immediately lifted Ramanuja who was sitting at his feet, embraced him tightly out of affection and addressed Ramanuja as “Emberumanare”, which means my Lord! Since then Ramanuja has been called Emberumanar and the tradition of revealing the

mantra to everyone, irrespective of their caste and other material titles, started. Though Ghostipurna was Ramanuja's guru, he overcame his ego and was deeply moved by Ramanuja's concern for other fellow human beings who were bound by the pangs of material nature. Ghostipurna said, "I have been chanting the holy mantra for many years and seriously practising spiritual life ever since I became the disciple of Yamunacharya. Yet, this sort of thought never occurred to me. Come, I will teach you the meaning and the greatness of the mantra that I taught you as it will enhance your devotion manifold."

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Gosthipurna-krpalabdha-mantra-rajaprakasakah – One who obtained the divine mantra (Ashtakshari) by the grace of Thirukosthiyur Nambi and openly revealed the same to the world."

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Holy Name 39: Vararanganukamphi

Mantra: Om Vararanganukamphi Namah

Meaning – One who obtained the grace of Sri Vararanga (Sri Thiruvaranga Perumal Arayar)

Pastime – After Sri Yamunacharya's disappearance, all the senior disciples of Sri Yamunacharya were entrusted with the responsibility of bringing Sri Ramanuja to Sri Rangam to Sri Vararanga (Sri Thiruvaranga Perumal Arayar). Accordingly, Sri Vararanga brought Sri Ramanuja to Sri Rangam and entrusted the Sri Rangam Matha to him. Further, as per the instructions of Sri Yamunacharya, each disciple was entrusted to teach a certain part of Vedic knowledge to Sri Ramanuja. Among them, Sri Vararanga was entrusted to bestow the knowledge of Dravida Vedas (Azhwar Compositions) and Arayar Seva (The art of singing Azhwar compositions pleasingly to the Supreme Lord). Even though the order of entrusting the knowledge is there, still, to obtain the knowledge from the Guru, the disciple should serve and please him. When the Guru is pleased with the disciple and his service, then he will bestow the knowledge. So as per tradition, Sri Ramanuja engaged in the service of Sri Vararanga (Sri Thiruvaranga Perumal Arayar) day and night. Mainly, Sri Ramanuja used to grind the Sandalwood paste for his Guru Sri Vararanga, because Sri Vararanga's service, which is Arayar Seva, makes his body to much heated, to cool the same, Sri Ramanuja daily makes Sandalwood paste in huge quantity and offers it to his Guru. This service continued for some time, once Sri Ramanuja prepared the sandalwood paste that was not satisfactory for Arayar, Sri Ramanuja found that just by looking at Arayar's face which showed dissatisfaction, still, Arayar (Sri Vararanga) didn't complain about it. Sri Ramanuja then prepares again sandalwood paste and offers it, which satisfies Arayar's heart so much that he immediately hugs Sri Ramanuja and starts to instruct the ultimate means and ultimate goal of life. He instructs "We should always think that the Lord Narayana who is lying down in Milk Ocean is the one who has taken the form of Acharya and service to the

Lotus feet of Acharya is greater than service to Lord Narayana". Further, Sri Vararanga bestows all the knowledge related to Azhwar Compositions and Arayar Seva, this is a pleasing service to the Lord by which one can offer Azhwar Compositions by singing and showing mudra (hand and facial expression), for the pleasure of Lordship. Both the meaning and the way of offering Azhwar Compositions for the pleasure of the Lord were learnt by Sri Ramanuja from his Guru Sri Vararanga.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Vararanganukamphi - One who obtained the grace of Sri Vararanga (Sri Thiruvaranga Perumal Arayar)".

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Holy Name 40: Dravidamnaya-sagaragah or Dravidamnaya-tattvanidhi

Mantra: Om Dravidamnaya-sagaragaya Namah or Om Dravidamnaya-tattvanidhiye Namah

Meaning – One who is the Ocean or Storehouse of the wisdom of Dravida Veda (Azhwar Compositions)

Pastime – Twelve Azhwars, who all appeared thousands of years ago in different timelines and sang the verses in glorification of Lord Narayana and disappeared. Over time, all of their compositions were completely forgotten. In the 9th or 10th century, Natha Muni, who is the prominent Acharya in Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya, went on a pilgrimage to Kumbakonam and visited Lord Aravamudan's temple. Some devotees were singing Nammazhwar's hymns before the Lord and in the end, they sang the Phala-Shruti, which reads, "We dedicate these ten hymns from the thousand sung by Kurugur Sadagopan to thee." Natha Muni was captivated by the philosophy and the diction enshrined in those hymns. He requested the devotees to teach him all the thousand hymns composed by Nammazhwar and the devotees expressed their ignorance about the remaining 990 hymns. Seeing Natha Muni's determination to learn the hymns, they asked him to inquire at Kurugur, the birthplace of Nammazhwar. To his dismay, the people of Kurugur had completely forgotten about Nammazhwar as he had left the planet thousands of years before Natha Muni.

Natha Muni's quest for Nammazhwar's works led him to a very old man called Parankusha Dasa. He too expressed his ignorance about Nammazhwar's works but taught him Kannin-siruthambu, the eleven hymns composed by Madhurakavi Azhwar in praise of his spiritual master, Nammazhwar. Parankusha Dasa told Natha Muni that his forefathers used to tell him that Nammazhwar would personally teach all the hymns composed by him to the person who chants Kannin-siruthambu 12,000 times with devotion before Nammazhwar's Deity at Kurugur. Parankusha Dasa also told Natha Muni that people used to go into a trance just by devotedly singing Kannin-siruthambu and getting Nammazhwar's mercy. Natha Muni was so madly in love with Nammazhwar's hymns that he

resolved to chant Kannin-siruthambu till Nammazhwar showered his mercy on him by teaching the 1,000 hymns.

Nammazhwar spoke to Natha Muni in his Deity form and taught Natha Muni all the works composed by him. Nammazhwar was so impressed with Natha Muni that he requested all the other Azhwars to teach their works to Natha Muni and the other Azhwars complied. Thus, Natha Muni revived all the works of the Azhwars with the help of Nammazhwar. Natha Muni returned to Vira Narayanapuram and started to classify and codify the works of the Azhwars before teaching them to interested devotees.

Nathamuni learned all the 4000 Divya Prabandhams from Nammazhwar himself at Azhwar Thirunagai and returned to his place Kattu Mannar Kovil. He recited the entire Divya Prabandhams in front of the deity in the temple of Kattu Mannar Kovil, Lord Mannanar (Narayana), and received all honours from Lord Narayana. He then reached his residence and invited his nephews Keelaghath-Alwan and Melaghath-Alwan, explaining to them about the special mercy he got from Nammazhwar and the divine form Nammazhwar showed in his dream (In Nathamuni's dream, Nammazhwar shows the divine form of Sri Ramanuja, who is going to appear in the future for the upliftment of Vaishnavism and also to propagate the Azhwars compositions). They both became astonished hearing about this and were satisfied that they got the chance to somehow relate to such a great personality like Nathamuni. After that, Nathamuni was teaching Dhavya Maha Mantra's meanings through Thiruvaimozhi to his dear disciple Thirukkannamangai Andan, who is very well qualified to be a proper disciple of Nathamuni. During "poliga poliga poliga" (Thiruvaimozhi 5.2.1) verse, Nathamuni explains the divine words of Nammazhwar and the incidents seen in his dream. Hearing this Thirukkannamangai Andan mentions "I am so blessed to have the relationship with your highness who has seen the divine form of Sri Ramanuja in your dream."

After this, Nathamuni became the head of the Sri Rangam temple and introduced singing Azhwar compositions, which are known as Dravida Veda, along with Samskrita Veda, which became part of a tradition. Later his disciples till the time of Yamunacharya, the tradition established by Nathamuni continued, but not expanded to a greater level. After the disappearance of Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja took up the responsibility of the entire Vaishnava community and also learned the Azhwar compositions from his Guru Thiruvaranga, when studying the Pashurams under his Guru, Sri Ramanuja used to give a deeper understanding of the Azhwars compositions, which use to mesmerize his Gurus. But there is nothing to wonder about, being the incarnation of Adisesha, he already knows everything. As predicted by Namazhwar in the dreams of Nathamuni, Sri Ramanuja travelled across the country and firmly established the singing and reciting of Azhwar compositions as part of the temple worship along with Samskrita Veda. It is to the credit of Sri Ramanuja that he harmonised the teachings of Dravida Veda with the import of Samskrita Veda. Srivaishnava Acharyas are known as the Ubhayavedanta Pravartaka Acharyas. A blending of

Samskrita Veda and Dravida Veda is like bringing the head and the heart together. It was Sri Ramanuja who affected this blend effectively so as to reinforce both. It is the credit of Sri Ramanuja that Azhwar compositions obtained the status of Vedas, and all the great scholars of his time surrendered to him and accepted the conclusions of Vaishnavism. Further studied the Azhwar compositions (Dravida Veda) along with Vedanta or Puranas (Samskrita Veda) from him.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Dravidamnaya-sagaragah or Dravidamnaya-tattvanidhi – One who is the Ocean or Storehouse of the wisdom of Dravida Veda (Azhwar Compositions)."

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Holy Name 41: Maladhararya-sujnata-dravidamnaya-tattvadhi

Mantra: Om Maladhararya-sujnata-dravidamnaya-tattvadhiye Namah

Meaning – One who studied in detail the Nammazhwar compositions, which is known as Thiruvaimozhi, from Sri Maladhararya (Sri Thirumaalai Andan)

Pastime – Thirumaalai Andan is a humble devotee, who was under the shelter of his Acharya Alavandar. He studied complete knowledge from Alavandar (Sri Yamunacharya) and became a great teacher of Vaishnavism. Thirumaalai Andan used to serve the predominating deity of Lord Kalazhagar in the Madurai region of present-day Tamilnadu. During Thirumaalai Andan time, some Malayalam magicians came to the Thirumalirunchola Azhagar Temple in Madurai with magic in their eyes and planned to seize the power of Alaghar and do harm to the temple. Realizing this, the Thirumaalai Andan offered them more pepper in the food, that was served to them, and the wizards of the Malayalam watered their eyes, melted the magic in their eyes, and exposed their guilt. They were also punished. Hence, Thirumaalai Andan was given the name of the patron saint of Tirumala and the title of Andan.

Among the five gurus of Sri Ramanuja, Thirumaalai Andan is one of those, who is deputed by Alavandar to bless Sri Ramanuja with the knowledge of Nammalwar's Thiruvaymozhi.

Once, Ghostipurna came to Sri-Rangam with his godbrother Maladhara, who was very dear to Yamunacharya from whom he had learned to interpret Thiruvaymozhi, the thousand hymns compiled by Nammalwar which are considered to be the essence of the scriptures. Ghostipurna asked Ramanuja to learn Thiruvaymozhi and its esoteric meaning from Maladhara. Ramanuja obeyed his preceptor without question.

Maladhara was an ardent follower of Yamunacharya and never deviated from the interpretations given by his spiritual master. Whenever Maladhara used to interpret the hymns of Thiruvaymozhi, Ramanuja used to suggest a different

meaning to the hymns. Maladhara was not willing to deviate from the traditional interpretations that he had learned from his guru and stopped teaching the hymns to Ramanuja mistaking him to be a heretic.

During his next visit to Sri Rangam, Ghostipurna asked Maladhara if Ramanuja had finished learning Thiruvaymozhi and its meaning. Maladhara said, “I stopped teaching the sacred Thiruvaymozhi to a heretic like Ramanuja. Whenever I try to teach him the interpretation given by our guru he suggests different meanings to the hymns and tries to justify his interpretations. I do not want to teach Thiruvaymozhi to such an arrogant person.”

Ghostipurna was surprised as he had a very good opinion about Ramanuja and asked Maladhara to tell him the meanings suggested by Ramanuja. When Maladhara told him about Ramanuja’s suggestions, Ghostipurna said, “I have heard our guru giving similar interpretations and Ramanuja is interpreting these verses like Yamunacharya without even meeting him. Ramanuja knows Yamunacharya’s heart and he is like Yamunacharya. Ramanuja knows the purport and the essence of the scriptures by his intuition and we regard him to be the incarnation of Lakshmana, the younger brother of Lord Rama. Just like Lord Krishna showered His mercy on Sandipani by accepting him as His guru despite being omniscient, Ramanuja has given us the chance to become his guru. Resume your lessons to Ramanuja immediately.”

Ghostipurana also told Maladhara how Ramanuja had revealed the Ashtakshari Mantra at the cost of risking his well-being for the sake of the emancipation of his fellow beings and Maladhara agreed to teach Ramanuja once again. Unlike before, Maladhara used to patiently listen to Ramanuja’s interpretations and appreciate them. Once Maladhara started interpreting a hymn from Thiruvaymozhi and Ramanuja suggested a different meaning, Maladhara would dance after listening to the interpretation. Maladhara circumambulated and prostrated before Ramanuja despite being his preceptor. Maladhara started to glorify Ramanuja for having understood the heart of Nammalwar and Yamunacharya better than him. Maladhara finished teaching Thiruvaymozhi to Ramanuja within a short period and made his son accept Ramanuja as his guru. Sri Ramanuja, the disciple of Thirumaalai Andan, also learnt the Tiruvai language from Thirumaalai Andan when he was learning Thiruvaimozhi.

After learning Thiruvaymozhi, Ramanuja once again started studying the dharmasastras under Vararanga at the behest of Mahapurna. Though Ramanuja was very popular and had many obedient disciples, he used to personally serve his preceptors. Ramanuja very soon mastered the scriptures and became a great scholar and saint.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Maladhararya-sujnata-dravidamnaya-tattvadhi – One who studied in detail the Nammazhwar compositions, which is known as Thiruvaimozhi, from Sri Maladhararya (Sri Thirumaalai Andan).”

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Holy Name 42: Catussapta-sisyadhya

Mantra: Om Catussapta-sisyadhyaya Namah

Meaning – One who had his 74 prominent disciples as Simhasana Adhipathis

Pastime – Once, Arulala Perumal Emperumanar's disciples, Ananthazhwan, Echan, Thondanur Nambi, and Marudhur Nambi prostrated in front of Sri Ramanuja and asked him "In future for the living entities, is there only one Acharya or are there many Acharyas after Sri Ramanuja? Please give a clear answer". Sri Ramanuja instructs them to go and find out the answer from Ponnacchiya (wife of Danurdasa). They went to her and told her "Sri Ramanuja wanted us to clarify our doubt with you. Is there one Acharya or many Acharyas for living entities? Please give us a clear answer". Ponnacchiya spreads her hair collects them all ties them together and tells them "I should not conclude the answer to your question; How will an incapable person like me know that? Sri Ramanuja himself should clarify your doubt". Saying that she picks up a saffron thread from the floor and keeps that on her head and leaves the place immediately. All of them leave the place with an unsatisfied mind and return to Sri Ramanuja and offer him obeisance again. When Sri Ramanuja asked them what happened over there, they said that she instructed them to get the answer from Sri Ramanuja himself. He asked them what was her activity while saying that and they explained the whole incident. Sri Ramanuja tells them "She did not just leave, she has cleverly explained to you the answer to your question and you have not understood her explanation". They request him to explain the meaning of her actions. Sri Ramanuja explains "The reason why she first spread her hair is to show that it looks like there are many Gurus for the living entities in future from different perspectives. She then collected them and tied them together to show that ultimately there is only one Acharya who gets the ultimate goal accomplished. Since she picked up a saffron thread from the floor, she showed that the Ultimate shelter and Acharya is Sri Ramanuja, who is a Sannyasi. By keeping that thread on her head, she showed that Sri Ramanuja is higher than everyone else and should be carried on everyone's head. Since she left the place, she showed that one should keep such Acharya in their heart very confidentially and constantly meditate on him. So, all of you also have faith in this message". Thus Sri Ramanuja revealed his Guru tattva, which is the solution for everyone given by Sri Ramanuja through Ponnacchiya. After this Sri Ramanuja appoints his prominent 74 disciples as the Simhasana-adipathis, the head of different Mathas, but the sole liberator for all the living entities, who surrenders to them is Sri Ramanujacharya.

Further,

In Guru Paramapara Vaibhavam of Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya, there is an verse, which states,

lakshmi naathaakya sinthau sadaribu jalathahaa praapya kaarunya neeram
naathaa thraavap kshinjan thathanu raguvaraam boja shaksur jalaabyaam
gathvathaam yaamunaagyam saridamath yatheenthragya
bathmaagaraenthraam
sampoorya praani sasyae pravahatha bahoothaa desikenthra pramegaihi

Meaning: Sri Lakshmi Nathan (Lord Narayana) is like a huge ocean. Nammazhwar is like a rain-bearing black cloud. This black cloud Azhwar took the water (knowledge) from the ocean and showered it as rain (compositions) on the hills. Hill is referred to as Swami Nathamuni. The water comes down as two waterfalls, waterfalls are referred to as Swami Uyyakkondaar and Swami Mannakkaal Nambi, these waterfalls reach the big river called Sri Aalavandaar (Sri Yamunacharya). Then the water accumulated in a lake. This Lake is referred to as Swami Ramanuja. From the lake, the water is distributed through 74 channels.

These 74 channels referred to are referred to 74 Simhasanthipathis, who were selected by Swami Ramanuja to spread Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya. Thus Guruparampara signifies, that the mercy from the Lord reached all living entities through 74 Simhasanathipathis.

It is also significant to note that, the birthplace of Nathamuni and his grandson Alavandar (Sri Yamunacharya) is known as Kattu Mannar Kovil, which is the abode of Lord Veeranarayana Swamy. There exists the lake known as Veeranarayanapuram Lake, in short, Veeranam Lake, which is such a huge lake it has 74 outlet channels for the distribution of water. Inspired by this, Sri Ramanuja appointed 74 Simhasnathipathis to propagate Vaishnavism, Great Acharyas in the Vaishnava clan interpreted the meaning of the 74 outlets of the lake like that.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Catussapta-sisyadhya – One who had his 74 prominent disciples as Simhasana Adhipathis.”

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Holy Name 43: Pancacarya-padasraya

Mantra: Om Pancacarya-padasrayaya Namah

Meaning – One who took shelter of five acharyas (Periya Nambi, Thirumalai Nambi, Thirukoshtiyur Nambi, Thiruvarangaperumal Araiyar, and Thirumaalai Aandan)

Pastime – After the disappearance of Sri Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja took shelter of five Acharyas, who were all prominent disciples of Sri Yamunacharya, and learned from them all the important aspects of devotional services, which is

as per the desire of Sri Yamunacharya. Further, Sri Ramanuja's devotion to the lotus feet of his Gurus or Acharyas was exemplary.

Once, Sri Ramanuja went to see Ghostipurna, and Ghostipurna, who was adept in Ashtanga-yoga, was deeply engrossed in meditation and was in a state of a trance. Ramanuja waited till Ghostipurna came out of his trance and asked him if he enjoyed meditating on the Lord. Ghostipurna said, "I stopped meditating on the Lord after coming to know about the glory of my Guru, Yamunacharya. I always meditate on the lotus feet of my Guru and I worship Him as I worship the Lord." Sri Ramanuja understood the greatness of the Guru and started to worship Yamunacharya and Ghostipurna as his Gurus. Further, Sri Ramanuja had great respect for his other preceptors and senior disciples of Yamunacharya like Mahapurna (Periya Nambi), Sri Shaila Purna (Sri Thirumalai Nambi), Vararanga (Thiruvarangaperumal Araiyar), and Maladhara (Thirumaalai Aandan).

Even though, Sri Ramanuja is the disciple of five acharyas (Periya Nambi, Thirumalai Nambi, Thirukoshtiyur Nambi, Thiruvarangaperumal Araiyar, and Thirumaalai Aandan), still, they had great respect for him. This can be observed in the acts of these acharyas.

1. Even though Periya Nambi was Ramanujacharya's Guru, He venerated Ramanujacharya and even some time prostrated before Ramanuja. When someone asks the reason for his paying a prostrated obeisance to his disciple Ramanujacharya. Periya Nambi used to say "I am seeing my Guru Alavandar in Ramanuja." In this way, he has great regard for both Alavandar and Ramanuja. There is a particular statement written by a devotee that "Acharya's should have great respect for their disciples" and Periya Nambi lived by that. Even for mundane problems, He looked up to Ramanuja. When His daughter Atthuzhai came to him with her domestic problems He directed her to Ramanujacharya for guidance and solutions.

2. As Ramanuja was nearing the top of the Hills, Periya Thirumalai Nambi received him on the way with the Holy Thirtha and Prasada. Ramanuja prostrated before Nambi and received the Temple Honours. Should you or Nambi yourself have come with these temple Honours? Is there no person junior to you to do this task?" Ramanuja enquired. Periya Thirumalai Nambi replied," My dear Ramanuja, I searched in all the four Mada streets around the temple. There is nobody junior to me. Hence, I considered being fit to carry here the Holy Prasada and other Temple Honours for you." Ramanuja was amazed at the humility and bhakti of Periya Thirumalai Nambi. As they were approaching the temple, the Jiyars, Ekangins, Sthanadhipatis, and others assembled before the temple and received Ramanuja with full Honours.

3. On the order of Periya Nambi, Sri Ramanuja visits Thirukoshtiyur to obtain the mantra diksha. Thirukosthiyur Nambi (Sri Ghosthipurna) tests severely Sri Ramanuja. At the house of Sri Ghosthipurna, Sri Ramanuja prostrated

before Thirukoshtiyur Nambi's daughter Devaki Piratti imagining that it signified Purushakaram of Devaki herself for receiving the meaning of Charama Sloka from Thirukoshtiyur Nambi. Because to get the mantra Diksha from Thirukoshtiyur Nambi, Sri Ramanuja needs to struggle a lot to satisfy Thirukoshtiyur Nambi. But, endowed with such a quality of Vaishnavi that Thirukoshtiyur Nambi gave her the mantra Diksha.

Also, Thiruvarangaperumal Araiyar and Thirumaalai Aandan, both understood the glory of Sri Ramanuja over time and started to offer their respects to him.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Pancacarya-padasraya – One who took shelter of five acharyas (Periya Nambi, Thirumalai Nambi, Thirukoshtiyur Nambi, Thiruvarangaperumal Araiyar, and Thirumaalai Aandan)."

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Holy Name 44: Prapitavisatirthambu-prakatikrta-vaibhavah

Mantra: Om Prapitavisatirthambu-prakatikrta-vaibhavaya Namah

Meaning – One who remained unaffected even after drinking the Holy water mixed with poison (which was offered to him by envious people)

Pastime – Some of the priests, who were controlling Lord Ranganatha's temple, could not digest Ramanuja's popularity. As most of the people, including those who used to come to Lord Ranganatha's temple, were going to Ramanuja's monastery and were gradually becoming his ardent disciples, the priests feared that their income would be affected and they might very soon become insignificant in the town. One of the chief priests of Lord Ranganatha's temple conspired with others and decided to eliminate Ramanuja by poisoning him. One day, the chief priest mixed some deadly poison in the thirtham, which is served to the devotees in the temple, and gave it to Ramanuja. Though Ramanuja suspected that the thirtham was poisoned due to its smell and taste, he drank it with devotion. Ramanuja maintained his equipoise and prayed for the welfare of the priest and others who were supporting him. Ramanuja silently walked out of the temple. The chief priest became delighted as he thought that the poisoned thirtham would certainly kill Ramanuja and went home thinking that he would see Ramanuja's dead body the following day.

The next morning the priest came out of his house expecting to hear the news of Ramanuja's death. However, he was stunned to see Ramanuja coming in a procession along with many of his disciples, who were singing the verses compiled by the alwars. Ramanuja was engrossed in contemplating the meanings of the verses, which were being sung by the accompanying devotees. The captivating mien and childlike countenance of Ramanuja brought about a strange sort of transformation in the priest and he could not digest the guilt of having tried to kill Ramanuja twice. The priest ran towards Ramanuja and fell at

his feet with tears in his eyes. The priest said, “Sir, please forgive this sinful soul. Without realizing your greatness, I tried to kill you by poisoning. I do not deserve your forgiveness. Please throw me to hell. Despite being a priest, I tried to kill a noble soul like you. There cannot be a soul who is as sinful as me.”

The priest started to bang his head on the ground in despair and blood started to ooze from his head. As Ramanuja had focused his mind on the glories of the Lord and was in a state of a trance he did not notice the priest. The devotees stopped singing as soon as they saw blood on the priest’s head and Ramanuja came back to his consciousness and was shocked to see the priest holding his feet. Ramanuja understood everything and lifted the priest and said, “Sir, we are all human beings and are likely to commit mistakes. We have to frequently retrospect to correct ourselves. One can overcome the sinful reactions through repentance and unconditional surrender to Lord Ranganatha.”

The priest thanked Ramanuja for forgiving him and requested Ramanuja to accept him as a disciple. Thus, the chief priest of Lord Ranganatha’s temple became a disciple of Ramanuja. The chief priest eventually became a good devotee and attained liberation after death.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Prapitavisatirthambu-prakatikrta-vaibhavah – One who remained unaffected even after drinking the Holy water mixed with poison (which was offered to him by envious people).”

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Holy Name 45: Pranatartiharacarya-dattabhiksaika-bhojanah

Mantra: Om Pranatartiharacarya-dattabhiksaika-bhojanaya Namah

Meaning – One who used to accept the food given by Kidambi Achan as his daily alms (Bhiksha)

Pastime – Some of the priests, who were controlling Lord Ranganatha’s temple, could not digest Ramanuja’s popularity. As most of the people, including those who used to come to Lord Ranganatha’s temple, were going to Ramanuja’s monastery and were gradually becoming his ardent disciples, the priests feared that their income would be affected and they might very soon become insignificant in the town. One of the chief priests of Lord Ranganatha’s temple conspired with others and decided to eliminate Ramanuja by poisoning him. The chief priest convinced Ramanuja to come to his house for alms one day. The priest went to his house with some deadly poison gave it to his wife and said, “Listen, Ramanuja is coming to our house for alms today. Prepare some good food and poison the food that would be offered to him as alms. If he continues to live, we will have to beg for a living. With his sweet and crafty words, he has tricked the people of Sri-Rangam into believing him to be an incarnation of

Lakshmana. Very soon we might lose our importance in this town if we allow him to continue like this."

Following her husband's instructions, the chief priest's wife prepared different varieties of food and mixed some poison in them. Ramanuja came to the priest's house for alms. The priest's wife washed his feet and made him sit. Being an obedient wife, the priest's wife had decided to offer the poisoned food to Ramanuja, but after seeing his captivating appearance and radiating childlike countenance the lady was moved. Despite her best efforts, she could not offer the poisoned food and tears started rolling down her cheeks as she was overwhelmed with affection towards Ramanuja. The priest's wife said, "Son, take your alms elsewhere today. This food is poisoned."

Saying so, the priest's wife threw away the food. Ramanuja was stunned as he did not understand why people were trying to poison him when he did not harbour ill will against anyone and was working for the welfare of society. With a heavy heart, Ramanuja silently walked out of the priest's house.

With a feeling of dejection, after coming to know about the chief priest's intention to poison him to death, Ramanuja lost his appetite. Instead of going to other households for his alms, Ramanuja walked towards river Cauvery in the hot sun and started to ponder over the reasons that might have prompted the priest to kill him. For a continuous couple of days, he stopped begging and honouring any food or water, he just fasted. Sri Ramanuja's guru, Ghostipurna, on coming to know of the attempt on Ramanuja's life, hastened to the banks of the Cauvery to see him. Ramanuja saw Ghostipurna coming towards him and prostrated before Ghostipurna to offer his obeisance to his guru. Though the dunes were very hot due to the summer heat, Ramanuja did not raise himself from the ground until Ghostipurna lifted him and hugged him. Being aggrieved at the chief priest's envy towards his disciple, Ghostipurna wants the safety of his disciple and waits for the response of Ramanuja's disciples on the act of not lifting Ramanuja from the hot sand Cauvery bed, seeing the incident Kidambi Achan, the disciple of Sri Ramanuja, immediately lifted Sri Ramanuja from the hot sand and started to an enquiry from the Ghostipurna for his act and Ghostipurna, who is very pleased by the behaviour of Kidambi Achan and his concern for Sri Ramanuja, Ghostipurna asked Ramanuja to stop begging from that day and he instructed Kidambi Achan, the disciple of Ramanuja to cook for his guru. Then onwards, Sri Ramanuja used to accept the food as daily alms from Kidambi Achan.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Pranatartiharacarya-dattabhiksaika-bhojanah – One who used to accept the food given by Kidambi Achan as his daily alms (Bhiksha)."

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Holy Name 46: Pavitrikrta-kuresah

Mantra: Om Pavitrikrta-kuresaya Namah

Meaning – One who used to consider his disciple, Kuresha (Kuratazhwar), as his Pavitram (Yajnopavita)

Pastime – Mahapurna asked Sri Ramanuja to go to Ghostipuram which is around 65 miles away from Sri Rangam, and learn the most sacred Ashtakshari Mantra from Ghostipurna, one of the senior-most disciples of Yamunacharya. Being impressed with Ghostipurna's devotion, Yamunacharya had revealed the Ashtakshari Mantra to Ghostipurana and had asked him not to reveal it to the undeserving as it was believed to be the most sacred mantra and the essence of scriptures. Ramanuja walked to Ghostipuram to meet Ghostipurna.

Sri Ramanuja walked to Ghostipuram sixteen times just to learn the mantra and each time Ghostipurna sent him back without teaching the mantra by giving some excuse to test him. During his seventeenth visit, Ghostipurna told Ramanuja that he would reveal the mantra on his next visit and asked him to come alone with the words, "Oh Ramanuja! During your next visit, you only come with your sacred thread (Pavitram) and staff (Tri-danda)." However, Sri Ramanuja took his nephew Dasarathi and his dearest disciple Kuresha along with him when he went to see Ghostipurna.

Seeing Dasarathi and Kuresha along with Ramanuja, Ghostipurna, in a stern voice, said, "I had asked you to come lonely. Why did you bring these two people along with you?"

Ramanuja replied, "Sir, Dasarathi is like my staff (Tridanda) and Kuresha is like my sacred thread (Pavitram). How can I live without them?"

Ghostipurna asked Dasarathi and Kuresha to stay back and took Ramanuja to a secluded place. After Ramanuja promised not to reveal the sacred mantra to the undeserving and to reveal the mantra to a devotee only after completely testing him, Ghostipurna revealed the sacred mantra to him.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Pavitrikrta-kuresah – One who used to consider his disciple, Kuresha (Kuratazhwar), as his Pavitram (Yajnopavita)."

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Holy Name 47: Bhagineya-tridandakah

Mantra: Om Bhagineya-tridandakaya Namah

Meaning – One who used to consider his cousin, who is also his disciple, Mudaliandan (Dasarathi), as his Tridanda (staff)

Pastime –Sri Ramanuja's cousin is Dasarathi (Mudaliandan). One day in Kanchipuram Sri Ramanuja thought of taking Sannyasa and he sacrificed everything at the time of taking Sannyasa (ascetic order) but he did not give up Dasarathi, as that ascetic order demanded that all kith and kin should be renounced. To this, Sri Ramanuja replied that Dasarathi was an exception as if he leaves Dasarathi, means he leaves Lord Rama and said he doesn't want to be ascetic without Dasarathi and added "If it is possible for me an ascetic to give up my staff, only then can Dasarathi leave me. He, though a bodily relation, is yet kin to my soul. Because Sri Ramanuja knows that Mudaliandan is Lord Rama's avatar or incarnation." So then onwards Dasarathi (Mudaliandan) always stayed with Sri Ramanuja as a staff and never separated from him.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Bhagineya-tridandakah - One who used to consider his cousin, who is also his disciple, Mudaliandan (Dasarathi), as his Tridanda (staff)."

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Holy Name 48: Kuresadasarathyadi-caramartha-prakasakah

Mantra: Om Kuresadasarathyadi-caramartha-prakasakaya Namah

Meaning – One who bestowed the meaning of Charama Sloka to his disciples headed by Kuresha and Dasarathi.

Pastime – There are three Charama-shlokas ("ultimate verses"), which are prominent in Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya.

The first of these is found in the Ramayana (Yuddha-khanda 18.34): "If anyone surrenders to Me even once (sakrid eva), saying, 'I am yours,' I will protect that person in all circumstances. This is My promise."

The context of the verse is as follows: When Vibhishana, the younger brother of the demon Ravana, decides to turn against his own flesh and blood and seek refuge in Lord Rama, the Lord's associates become suspicious—except Hanuman, who knows Vibhishana's heart. Hanuman had met Vibhishana in Ravana's court after Hanuman's earlier flight across the ocean to Lanka. Showing his favour toward Lord Rama and His devotees, Vibhishana interceded when Ravana had ordered Hanuman killed.

Nonetheless, everyone in Rama's camp suspected that Vibhishana's defection was insincere and that he was probably acting as a spy on Ravana's behalf. But Rama and Hanuman knew better, and Rama uttered the shloka above, affirming that He will accept and protect anyone who comes to Him in a mood of full surrender (saranagati), as Vibhishana had done.

The next shloka is from the Varaha Purana (114.64–65), with Lord Varaha (Vishnu's boar incarnation) making a similar proclamation about saranagati to

His consort Bhumi Devi, the predominating goddess of the Earth: “The entire universe is My body. Neither birth nor death has any effect on Me. When one gives oneself to Me [saranagati] with the firm belief that I am his everlasting support, I think of him at the time of his death and rush to his side even if he has no control over his senses, with his body appearing like a log or stone. I lead him then to My supreme abode, where he performs eternal service to Me.”

This verse emphasizes the reciprocal nature of love: Not only does the devotee love the Lord, but the Lord loves His devotee. The devotee remembers Lord Varaha (Narayana), and Lord Varaha in His kindness remembers His devotee, bringing him to the Supreme abode.

The final shloka is the famous utterance of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita (18.66): “Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender [sharanam, i.e., saranagati] unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.”

In Krishna’s words, we see the same essential elements of the other two shlokas: He asks for complete surrender (saranagati), assures reciprocation, and offers His devotee a sense of protection and well-being.

Understanding the importance of learning Charama Shloka, Sri Ramanuja wished to learn the same thing from his Guru, Sri Ghosthipura at Thirukosthiyur. After obtaining the Asthkashri Mantra from Sri Ghosthipura very difficult way, this time Sri Ramanuja endeavours to obtain the meanings of Charama Shloka.

Once Sri Ramanuja received the mantra, Sri Ghosthipura told Sri Ramanuja to reveal the meaning of Charama Sloka to the proper person after duly testing them. Sri Ramanuja asked Ghostipurna if he could reveal the meaning of the Charama Sloka to Kuresha and Dasarathi, whom he considered to be his staff and sacred thread. Ghostipurna told Ramanuja not to reveal the meaning of the Charama Sloka to anyone who was not willing to follow Brahmacharya and without testing anyone for at least one year. Ramanuja promised to follow his instructions this time and left for Sri Rangam.

Kuresha who was aware of the ephemeral nature of this material world was eager to know the meaning of the mantra at the earliest possible moment. Kuresha approached Ramanuja with folded hands and said, “Sir, please reveal the meaning of the great Charama Sloka to this humble servant of yours. I am desperate to know its meaning as that is believed to increase one’s devotion to the Supreme Lord.”

Ramanuja said, “My preceptor, Ghostipurna has asked me not to reveal the meaning to anyone unless I have tested him properly for one year and one is strictly following brahmacharya.”

Kuresha once again said, “My master, this world is ephemeral and I do not know if I will live for one year. Pray, reveal the meaning to me at the earliest.”

Ramanuja said, “I cannot breach the promise that I have given to my preceptor. If you cannot wait for one year, fast for one month continuously as the scriptures say that fasting for one month is equal to practising brahmacharya for one year.”

Kuresha abstained from consuming solid food for one entire month and followed all the instructions given by Ramanuja. Eventually, Ramanuja revealed the meaning of the Charama Sloka to Kuresha.

After coming to know that Ramanuja had revealed the meaning of the Charama Sloka to Kuresha, Dasarathi asked Ramanuja to reveal it to him also.

As Dasarathi was proud of having taken birth in a noble family and of being Ramanuja’s relative, Ramanuja said, “My preceptor has asked me not to reveal the Charama Sloka to anyone without testing him for at least one year. As you are related to me, I might overlook your mistakes and not test you properly. Therefore, go and request Ghostipurna to reveal the meaning of the Charama Sloka to you. I am sure that he will reveal it to you easily as you are a very learned Brahmana and have taken birth in a very noble family.”

Dasarathi went to Ghostipurna and started serving him to learn the meaning of the Ashtakshari Charama Sloka. After devoutly serving Ghostipurna for six months, he requested Ghostipurna to reveal the Charama Sloka to him. Ghostipurna had by then realized Ramanuja’s intentions behind sending Dasarathi to him. Ghostipurna said, “My son, Ramanuja is the right person to reveal the Charama Sloka. Go to him and serve him devotedly and he will reveal the meaning of the Charama Sloka to you at the right time. Understand the fact that noble birth and learning bring pride to one and an aspiring devotee should never let these things overpower him and he should try to maintain humility under all circumstances.”

Like an obedient disciple, Dasarathi went back to Ramanuja. Ramanuja was sitting in his ashram at Sri Rangam and his spiritual master Mahapurna’s daughter, Attulai, came to him with tears in her eyes. She said, “Sir, in my husband’s house I have to fetch water from a distant well and I am afraid of the deserted road. I told my mother-in-law about my fears and she became angry. She said that I should have brought someone from my father’s house to fetch water and cook and that they do not have enough means to employ a servant. I was deeply pained by her rebuke and told my father about it. My father asked me to approach you and told me that you would set it right.”

Ramanuja thought for a while and said, “I will send a Brahmana to work as your cook and servant,” and looked towards Dasarathi. Dasarathi immediately rose from his seat and followed Attulai to her husband’s place in a distant remote village. Dasarathi served as a humble servant in Attulai’s house for nearly six months and used to do all the household chores including fetching water and firewood and cooking. Once, a scholar of great repute came to Attulai’s village

and started to give a discourse on scriptures. The scholar was interpreting the scriptures wrongly and Dasarathi interrupted the discourse to correct the mistake. The scholar became angry and said, “How can lowly cooks like you understand the essence of the scriptures? Go and show your expertise in the kitchen.”

Dasarathi did not lose his cool and he continued to explain the rules of grammar that have to be applied while interpreting the scriptures. The scholar realized his mistake and said, “Sir, your knowledge of scriptures seems to be better than mine and people like me should study under you. Who are you and why are you working as a cook when you can employ people to cook for you if you make up your mind?”

Dasarathi said, “Know me to be a humble disciple of the great Yatiraja of Sri-Rangam. I am here by the order of my master and I must do whatever he commands.”

Dasarathi went back to his service and Attulai’s in-laws became embarrassed after they came to know that a great scholar like Dasarathi was working as a cook in their house. They requested Dasarathi to forgive them for the sin that they had committed by engaging him as a cook by mistaking him for an ordinary person and requesting him to go back to Ramanuja. However, Dasarathi was not willing to stop his service unless Ramanuja asked him to do so. Attulai’s mother-in-law came to Ramanuja with folded hands and said, “Noble sir, please forgive us for having asked for a servant and recall your disciple who worked as a humble servant without giving us a chance to realize his scholarship or his noble birth, just because you ordered him to do so. Please forgive us for having offended your guru, Mahapurna, by insulting his daughter.”

Sri Ramanuja immediately called Dasarathi from Attulai’s house and embraced him. Ramanuja revealed the meaning of the Charama Sloka to Dasarathi without any delay.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Kuresadasarathyadi-caramartha-prakasakah – One who bestowed the meaning of Charama Sloka to his disciples headed by Kuresha and Dasarathi.”

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Holy Name 49: Rangesa-venkatesadi-prakatikrtavaibhavah

Mantra: Om Rangesa-venkatesadi-prakatikrtavaibhavaya Namah

Meaning – One whose divine glories were exhibited or proclaimed by Lordships headed by Lord Ranganatha and Lord Venkatesha

Pastime – Initially Thiruvarangathu Amudhanar, who was in-charge of Sri Rangam Temple, was not entertaining Sri Ramanuja and his followers to be

involved in the management of the temple and worship of Lord Ranganatha. But, by the mercy of Kuratazhwan, Thiruvarangathu Amudhanar's heart changed. So, after surrendering to Kuratazhwan by the instruction of Sri Ramanuja, Thiruvarangathu Amudhanar started to appreciate the glories of Sri Ramanuja, so much so that, he wrote a composition known as Ramanuja Nootrandaadhi (108 verses) on Sri Ramanuja and submits that to Lord Ranganatha and Sri Ramanuja. Sri Ramanuja personally doesn't want to glorify himself, but, Lord Ranganatha want to glorify or proclaim his dear devotee, Sri Ramanuja's glories.

So, once during the last day of Brahmothsavam (Yearly festival) in Sri Rangam, Lord Ranganatha orders Sri Ramanuja not to accompany him in the procession and asks other Vaishnavas to recite Ramanuja Nootrandaadhi, which was composed by Thiruvarangathu Amudhanar in glorification of Sri Ramanuja, during the procession – which eventually becomes a routine to be followed during every utsava or festivity. Understanding the desire of Lord Ranganatha, Sri Ramanuja himself acknowledges this great work of Thiruvarangathu Amudhanar and includes that as part of Iyarpa recital (Reciting prayers for the pleasure of Lord Ranganatha from Azhwars Pashurams (Verses)), similar to how Kanninum Chiru Thambu of Madhurakavi Azhwar, which glorifies Nammazhwar is included in recital during Lord's glorification. Ramanuja Nootrandaadhi is glorified and recited by all the important Acharyas.

Similarly, many deities of the Lord in several holy places like Tirumala, Melukote, etc… enacted various pastimes to proclaim the glories of his dear servant, Sri Ramanuja.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Rangesa-venkatesadi-prakatikrtavaibhavah - One whose divine glories were exhibited or proclaimed by Lordships headed by Lord Ranganatha and Lord Venkatesha."

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Holy Name 50: Devarajarcanaratah

Mantra: Om Devarajarcanarataya Namah

Meaning – One who is always immersed in the worship of Lord Devaraja (Varadaraja), his worshippable deity

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja was fed up with Yadava Prakasha's tantrums and he decided to study the scriptures by himself. Ramanuja started giving discourses on scriptures and people started to gather around him. The news of Ramanuja parting ways with Yadava Prakasha reached Kanchipurna and he became very happy. Kanchipurna hastened towards Ramanuja's house to see him. Ramanuja, who was giving a discourse on the scriptures, rose from his seat as soon as he saw Kanchipurna and fell at his feet seeking his blessings. Ramanuja requested Kanchipurna to accept him as a disciple. Being a very humble person from a shudra caste, Kanchipurna said, "You are a high-class Brahmana and a great

scholar. How can an ordinary ignorant shudra like me take you for a disciple? By the mercy of Lord Varadaraja, I can serve Him and I don't know anything else. Please don't humiliate me by falling at my feet or requesting me to accept you as my disciple."

With folded hands, Ramanuja said, "Sir what is the use of learning when it is not used or practiced? Many so-called scholars learn and memorize the scriptures thoroughly and carry the knowledge in their heads without applying or practicing it like the ignorant donkeys that carry sandalwood on their backs. The study of scriptures should lead to loving service to the Supreme Lord to attain His mercy. By the mercy of the Lord, you are already in His service and are very dear to Him. Please don't deny me the shade of your lotus feet just because I am a Brahmana."

Kanchipurna became very happy and said, "I am blessed to see unflinching devotion to the Lord in you. Lord Varadaraja will fulfil your desire to take shelter under a bonafide guru. Till then please fetch water early in the morning for the Lord's ablutions every day." Ramanuja followed Kanchipurna's advice without uttering a word.

Once when Kanchipurna (Thirukachi Nambi) was fanning the Lord he said, "My Lord everyone is making a great man out of this humble Sudra. Even Ramanuja, who is considered to be an incarnation of Lakshmana, falls at my feet requesting me to accept him as my disciple. How can a lowly Sudra like me accept him as my disciple? I am being embarrassed again and again by such actions of the people. Please permit me to go to Tirumala to serve You in Your form as Venkateshwara." Understanding Kanchipurna's dilemma, the Lord permitted him to go to Tirumala. Kanchipurna started to serve Lord Venkateshwara in Tirumala and Ramanuja started to miss him very badly. He started spending his time serving Lord Varadaraja, chanting and singing the glories of the Lord and studying scriptures by himself.

After six months, Lord Varadaraja appeared in Kanchipurna's dream and said, "We are feeling the heat of your absence. Return to Kanchipuram and resume your fanning service at the earliest." Kanchipurna was very attached to the Deity form of the Lord as Varadaraja. Therefore, he returned to Kanchipuram immediately and resumed his services to the Lord. Ramanuja came to know about Kanchipurna's return and rushed to his kuteeram to see him. Ramanuja fell at Kanchipurna's feet and clasped them tightly and Kanchipurna lifted Ramanuja and hugged him. Ramanuja inquired about Kanchipurna's experiences at Tirumala and both of them discussed various topics related to Tirumala for a long time. After this, Sri Ramanuja spent most of his time in the service of Lord Varadaraja by bringing water from the well for Abhishekam and other devotional services. Later on the order of Lord Varadaraja, Sri Ramanuja accepted Mahapurna as his Guru, and he accepted Sannyasa from Lord Varadaraja and on his order, he moved to Sri Rangam.

Sri Ramanuja is attached to Lord Varadaraja, so much so that, after he moved to Sri Rangam, he became the in-charge of the entire Sri Vaishnava community, head of Lord Ranganatha temple, travelled across the country and offered his services to all the deities of the prominent Vishnu temple across the country, still, Sri Ramanuja use to carry his personal deity for daily worship, the deity is none other than, the small worshippable deity of Lord Varadaraja. All the success obtained by Sri Ramanuja in the course of his preaching is only due to the mercy of Lord Varadaraja.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Devarajarcanaratah – One who is always immersed in the worship of Lord Devaraja (Varadaraja), his worshippable deity."

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Holy Name 51: Mukamukti-pradayakah

Mantra: Om Mukamukti-pradayakaya Namah

Meaning – One who gave liberation to the Dumb boy

Pastime – In Kanchipuram, there was a boy who could not speak (Dumb). Once he went to take his bath in River Vegavati, but suddenly he disappeared. Every one of his relatives and community people started to search for him, but the search was in vain. Finally, they understood the bad fate of the boy. The boy was around seven years of age at the time of his disappearance. Four years later, he came back. The people were completely dumb-stuck by the boy's sudden appearance, and everyone started to enquire him, even though they knew that the boy was dumb. To add further shock, now the boy was able to speak! He said he had slipped into a river and had been carried to the ocean. From there he had been to the milky ocean. There he saw a divine realm, where Lord Narayana was lying on the Adisesha, and Narayana's legs were massaged by Goddess Lakshmi. There Lord Narayana was instructing Adisesha to go to earth and propagate Vaishnavism. On the order of Lord Narayana, Adisesha appeared as Sri Ramanuja on the earth. While the boy was saying this, he fell to the ground and left his body. In the Milky Ocean, when Lord Narayana instructing Adisesha about the mission on Earth, the boy hears everything. Before sending back the boy, they instructed him that, the talks of there is "Deva Rahasyam – the secrets of Gods", which should not be disclosed to anyone. The boy did not take that instruction very seriously, out of enthusiasm he revealed all the things that happened. But, that knowledge about Sri Ramanuja guaranteed him liberation from material entanglement, for it is important to know of the Acharya's greatness to attain liberation. Then onwards Sri Ramanuja's greatness also became evident.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Mukamukti-pradayakah – One who gave liberation to the Dumb boy."

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Holy Name 52: Yajnamurti-pratisthatre

Mantra: Om Yajnamurti-pratisthatre Namah

Meaning – One who defeated the Mayavada scholar named Yajnamurti, further firmly established him in the Vaishnavism

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja's fame began to spread far and wide. There was a great mayavadi scholar called Yajnamurthy, who was very proud of his knowledge. Yajnamurthy had travelled all over the country and had defeated all the scholars who dared challenge him. His attendants used to carry a cartload of books wherever he went. Having defeated all the scholars in North India and received various titles from different kings, Yajnamurthy had established himself as a great scholar and people used to consider him to be the personification of knowledge. Some devotees who had gone on a pilgrimage to North India told Yajnamurthy about Ramanuja and how Ramanuja had refuted many mayavadi scholars. They also told Yajnamurthy that even staunch mayavadis like Yadava Prakasha had become disciples of Ramanuja and mayavada was losing ground in South India. Being an ardent follower of Advaita, Yajnamurthy decided to refute Ramanuja and re-establish the supremacy of Advaitism over Vaishnavism.

Yajnamurthy came to Sri Rangam along with his cartload of books. He went to Ramanuja's monastery to challenge Ramanuja for a debate. While refusing to accept Yajnamurthy's challenge, Ramanuja said, "You are a scholar of great repute and victory follows you wherever you go, I do not want to challenge you. Please think that you have defeated me and spare me the trouble of arguing with an undisputed scholar like you."

Yajnamurthy said, "If so, will you accept Advaita as superior to Vaishnavism and stop living in the illusory world?"

Sri Ramanuja smilingly replied, "We always believe this world and the individual souls that are enshrined in different bodies to be real. Therefore, we are not living in the illusory world like the mayavadis, who consider this world to be an illusion."

Yajnamurthy could not digest Ramanuja's reply and started to defend mayavada philosophy and Ramanuja started to refute Yajnamurthy's claims. Though Ramanuja was not willing to enter into a debate with Yajnamurthy he was drawn into it due to his efforts to defend Vaishnava philosophy, which was frequently attacked by the mayavadis. The argument went on for seventeen days and on the seventeenth day, Yajnamurthy seemed to have an upper hand. After the debate concluded for the day, Ramanuja went back to his monastery with a heavy heart. Ramanuja went to his deities, Lord Devaraja, and His consorts, and prayed to them. Addressing the Lord, Ramanuja said, "My Lord, by their misleading arguments, the mayavadis have shrouded the path to devotion,

which is established in the Vaishnava scriptures. Many of my preceptors have attained your mercy and liberation by following Vaishnava philosophy. How long will you continue to keep your children, who are embodied in this material world, away from you by allowing the mayavadis to reign? Please have mercy on your children. Dispel their ignorance by reestablishing the path of devotion."

After having prayed to the Lord, Ramanuja retired for the day and slept. Lord Varadaraja who is also worshipped as Devaraja, appeared in Ramanuja's dream and said, "Yathiraja do not despair. The path of devotion will be established in this world through you." Further, Lord Varadaraja informed Sri Ramanuja, "You were well aware of the literature known as Siddhitrayam, which was composed by Sri Yamunacharya, you quote from that literature. You take that as a reference and defeat the opponent."

The following day Ramanuja went to the debate venue with a lot of confidence as the Lord had assured him that Vaishnava philosophy would be reestablished in the world, further giving the points for defeating the opponent. Yajnamurthy was surprised to see Ramanuja's confidence as he thought that he had an upper hand in the debate. Even before Ramanuja entered the debate venue, Yajnamurthy prostrated before Ramanuja and requested Ramanuja to forgive him. Yajnamurthy said, "Being proud of my knowledge I challenged you and I have realized that needless arguments will not take me anywhere. People can attain the purpose of this human life only by following the footsteps of great people like you. Please accept me as your disciple."

Further, when questioned by Sri Ramanuja about the reason for his acts, Sri Yajnamurthy states, "Yesterday after the debate with me, you went back to your residence with less confidence. But, today you are coming with such confidence, which shows that you have answers to all my questions. Further, yesterday night I had a dream in which Lord Ranagnatha appeared and informed him about your glories and disclosed your identity as Adisesha himself. He rebuked me saying, how I can argue with Adisesha, who has thousands of mouths and win over."

After hearing the words of Sri Yajnamurthy, Sri Ramanuja still wishes to answer the questions raised by him and is not ready to accept the victory blindly. So, Sri Ramanuja answers all the questions and after hearing them, Sri Yajnamurthy falls at the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja. Sri Ramanuja lifted and embraced him, and accepted him as a disciple.

Being a staunch Mayavadi, Yajnamurthy had removed his sacred thread at the time of accepting the renounced order of life. Immediately after he embraced Vaishnavism and accepted Ramanuja as his guru, Yajnamurthy once again began to wear the sacred thread after performing atonement rituals and austerities to purify him. He started to apply the Vaishnava Urdhvapundras on twelve parts of the body following Ramanuja's guidance. As Yajnamurthy became his disciple immediately after Lord Devaraja told Ramanuja that Vaishnavism would be re-established in this world through him, Ramanuja renamed Yajnamurthy as

Devarajamuni. Devarajamuni quickly became a very good devotee and studied Vaishnava philosophy. Under the guidance of Ramanuja, Devarajamuni compiled two works called Jnanasara and Prameyasara in Tamil.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Yajnamurti-pratisthatre – One who defeated the Mayavada scholar named Yajnamurti, further firmly established him in the Vaishnavism.”

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Holy Name 53: Mannatha

Mantra: Om Mannathaya Namah

Meaning – One who is called by Thirukosthiyur Nambi (Gosthipura) as Emperumanar (Mannatha – My Lord)

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja pleased Sri Ghosthipura with his services and obtained the detailed meaning of Charama Shloka and Mantra Diksha. After getting the meaning of Mantra Diksha from Thirukosthiyur Nambi, against the warning from his Guru, Sri Ramanuja disclosed the Mantra to everyone out of compassion.

Yet again during one of the visits to Sri Rangam for a festival, Thirukkoshtiyur Nambi brought Sri Ramanuja in a secluded place in the Sri Rangam temple itself and started to explain the meanings of the word “Ekam”, which is the part of a shloka from Bhagavad Gita. But then he notices a devotee at that time lying down in deep sleep and snoring by his side. Immediately Thirukkoshtiyur Nambi retracts and says there is someone here and he stops explaining the meaning. But subsequently, Thirukkoshtiyur Nambi instructs the meanings to Sri Ramanuja and informs him that he should also explain this to deserving persons only. Sri Ramanuja after hearing it from Thirukkoshtiyur Nambi immediately in the bright noontime in the hot sun runs to Kurathazhwan’s house and shares the meaning he heard from Thirukkoshtiyur Nambi. Thus Sri Ramanuja shows his compassion to all living entities and does not expect any qualification or action from general people for the benediction, he is just ready to share the meanings, like he shared the meanings to Kurathazhwan without Kurathazhwan making any special efforts for that. For these compassionate moods of Sri Ramanuja, Thirukkoshtiyur Nambi affectionately called him “Emperumanar (Mannatha – My Lord)”.

After these incidents, Sri Ramanuja was famously known as “Emperumanar (My Lord)”, over time, Sri Ramanuja also gave initiation to a disciple and named him, “Sri Arulala Perumal Emperumanar,” who also used to stay in Sri Rangam. Once two Vaishnavas came to Sri Rangam, to get the blessings of Lord Ranganatha and Sri Ramanuja (Emperumanar), and asked the local people to gather there, the way to Math of Emperumanar (Sri Ramanuja). For this, the local people put a counter-question, asking "Which Emperumanar?". On hearing this the Vaishnavas were surprised and enquired back, "Why do you ask which Emperumanar? How many Emperumanar are there?". The local people replied,

"Yes, we have Sri Arulala Perumal Emperumanar and Sri Ramanuja (Emperumanar) with us in Sri Rangam, that's why we asked like that." The two Vaishnavas replied that they were not aware of Sri Arulala Perumal Emperumanar, and they asked only about Math of Emperumanar (Sri Ramanuja) and left the place after getting the directions.

Meanwhile, Sri Arulala Perumal Emperumanar happened to hear this conversation and was shocked to hear that he has been treated on par with his Acharya Sri Ramanuja, and was grief-stricken. He thought, "Just because I live away from the holy feet of my Acharya, I am being compared on par with him. What a sinner am I, to be separated from my Acharya." Thinking thus, he immediately demolished his Math and asked Ananthazhwan, Echan, Thondanur Nambi, Marudur Nambi and other disciples to go back to Sri Ramanuja, and himself fell at the feet of Sri Ramanuja and requested his Acharya to take him back. Sri Ramanuja after hearing all that had happened was extremely pleased with the Acharya Nishta of Sri Arulala Perumal Emperumanar and never got separated from him thereafter. From then on, Sri Arulala Perumal Emperumanar spent all his life under the feet of Sri Ramanuja, doing Service for his Acharya, and learning all the scriptures under his guidance.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Mannatha – One who is called by Thirukosthiyur Nambi (Gosthipura) as Emperumanar (Mannatha – My Lord)," and this name only suits him and nobody else.

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Holy Name 54: Dharanidharah

Mantra: Om Dharanidharaya Namah

Meaning - One who is an upholder of the Universe

Pastime – In Naradiyam Yadavadri Mahatmeyam, it is stated that,

anantha prathamam roopam
lakshmanascha satha para
bhalabhadra thrutheeyasthu
kalau kaschid bhavishyathi

Meaning: Lord Anantha, who is the first and foremost expansion of the Supreme Lord. Appeared as Lakshmana in Treta Yuga as the second incarnation, as Lord Balarama in Dwapara Yuga as the third incarnation, and as the fourth in Kaliyuga, he will take incarnation as a Mahapurusha.

This Mahapurusha can be interpreted as the appearance of Sri Ramanuja or Sri Vishvarupa, the brother of Lord Chaitanya, or Sri Nityananda Prabhu.

While glorifying Lord Balarama, the Pranama Mantra offered is,

namas te dharani-dhara namas te balanam srestha
pralambare namas te 'stu ehi mam krsna-purvaja

Meaning: Obeisances to You, Oh upholder of the earth (Dharanidhara). Obeisances to You, Oh best of the strong. Obeisances to You, Oh enemy of Pralamba. Please come to me, older brother of Krsna.

Once Ananta or Adisesha appeared as the son of Rishi Kasyapa, one of the Prajapatis, through Kadru as her eldest son. Kadru had asked her sons to stay suspended in the hair of Uchchaihshravas's tail who on refusing to do so were cursed to die at the serpent-yajna of Janamejaya. After Shesha, Vasuki, Airavata, and Takshaka were born, in order. A lot of Shesha's brothers were cruel and were bent upon inflicting harm on others. They were even unkind to Garuda, who was Kashyapa's son through Vinatha, sister of Kadru. (Kadru and Vinatha were daughters of Daksha).

Shesha, disgusted by the cruel acts of his brothers, left his mother and kin and took to austere penances. He lived on air and meditated in places including Gandhamadhana, Badrikashrama, Gokarna, Pushkara, and the Himalayas. His penances were so severe that his flesh, skin, and muscles dried up and merged with his frame. Lord Brahma, convinced of Shesha's will, asked Shesha to request a boon. Even though, Lord Brahma knows very well that, this very Sesha is an incarnation of Lord Sankarshana, who expands himself as Garbhodakshayi-Vishnu at the beginning of the universe to create him (Lord Brahma). In other words, Lord Sankarshana or Lord Sesha is Lord Narayana Himself. But, as a pastime he is enacting, Shesha asked that he be able to keep his mind under control so that he could continue to perform ascetic penances. Lord Brahma gladly accepted the request and also offered his respects to Shesha. Lord Brahma then understanding the position of Sesha as the incarnation of the Supreme Lord, asked a favour from Shesha, to go beneath the unstable earth and stabilize it. Shesha agreed and went to the netherworld and stabilized her with his hood, thus making Patala his perennial residence and he became the king of the Nagas in Patala. In this way, Lord Sankarshana in the form of Sesha supports this entire universe, that's why Lord Ramanuja, who is an incarnation of that Sesha or Sankarshana, is known as "Dharanidharah - One who is an upholder of the Universe," in the Puranas, it is stated that Shesha is supporting all the planets of the universe on his hoods and constantly singing the glories of Supreme Lord Vishnu with all his mouths (unlimited mouths) from time immemorial and still, he has not finished glorifying the activities and pastimes of Supreme Lord. Further for assisting the Supreme Lord in his pastimes and also propagation the Lord's glories among people, Sesha appears in the world as Lakshmana, Balarama, Vishvarupa, Nityananda Prabhu, etc…

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Holy Name 55: Varadacarya-sadbhaktah

Mantra: Om Varadacarya-sadbhaktaya Namah

Meaning – One who had a great devotee, Sri Varadacharya, as his disciple

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja and his disciples reached a village called Dehali on the first day of their pilgrimage to Tirumala and stayed in a disciple's house. The following day, they resumed their journey at dawn and reached a place called Ashtasahasra by early afternoon. Ramanuja had two disciples in Ashtasahasra. One of them, Yajnesha, was a very rich man and the other, Varadacharya, was a great devotee who used to subsist on begging and spent most of his time contemplating the glories of the Lord. Ramanuja thought that it would become very difficult for Varadacharya, who was a very poor man, to host him and his accompanying disciples and decided to go to Yajnesha's house. Ramanuja sent two disciples in advance to inform Yajnesha about his willingness to visit his house. After hearing the news of Ramanuja's willingness to visit his house, he was engrossed in making arrangements but did not take care of the two disciples, when the disciples returned to Sri Ramanuja, by understanding the incident, Sri Ramanuja immediately abandoned his plans to go to Yajnesha's house and decided to go directly to Varadacharya's house without informing him about their visit in advance.

As usual, Varadacharya had gone out to beg for his subsistence. Ramanuja and his disciples reached Varadacharya's house. As no one was seen outside the house, Ramanuja personally entered the verandah of the house. Varadacharya's wife, Lakshmi, who was drying the clothes after having her bath, ran into the inner chamber of the house as soon as she heard Ramanuja's footsteps as she did not have a second set of clothes to wear. As soon as Ramanuja entered the house Lakshmi clapped her hands from the inner chamber to tell Ramanuja that she was in the house, thinking Ramanuja might go away if he did not see anybody in the house. Ramanuja understood the plight of Lakshmi and threw the upper cloth that he was wearing towards her. Lakshmi hastily covered herself with the cloth and came out to greet and welcome Ramanuja. Lakshmi became very happy to see Ramanuja in her house and she repeatedly offered her obeisance to Ramanuja. Lakshmi greeted all the disciples who had accompanied Ramanuja and asked them to refresh themselves by taking a bath in the tank that was situated very next to her house. She also told the devotees that she would make arrangements to feed them before they returned from the tank.

Lakshmi searched the entire kitchen and could not find anything to offer to Ramanuja and his disciples. She began to ponder over various means to get items to feed the holy guests who had visited her house. A rich businessman in Ashtasahasra was captivated by Lakshmi's beauty and wanted to attain her. He had sent various female messengers to convince Lakshmi to submit to his will and had offered to give her a lot of money if she agreed to satisfy him. However, Lakshmi, a very good devotee and a chaste wife, rejected all the offers and preferred to lead a virtuous life. All of a sudden, Lakshmi remembered the rich man and his offer. She was willing to offer everything that she possessed to her

guru, who was worshipped as the personification of Lakshmana. Therefore, she thought of what use the body and chastity if they cannot be of any help to her guru and decided to take the help of the rich man to procure items to feed her guests.

Overcoming all her inhibitions, Lakshmi went towards the rich man's house. She entered the house from the back door and told the rich man's attendants that she had come to meet their master. As there was a huge cotton tree next to Varadacharya's house, people in Ashtasahasra used to call Varadacharya as Karpasarama. The attendants went and told the rich man that Karpasarama's wife had come to meet him. The rich man was shocked to hear about Lakshmi's arrival at his house as she had rejected all his offers and entreaties to come to him. The rich man immediately asked his attendants to bring Lakshmi into his presence. Lakshmi approached the rich man and said, "Sir, my guru who is the personification of goodness and an embodiment of all virtues, has come to our house. We must host him and gratify him. We do not have enough resources to feed the devotees who are accompanying him. Please make arrangements to help us host our guests and to gratify them. In return, I will agree to satisfy your desire after our guru continues his pilgrimage tonight."

As Lakshmi had rejected all his offers, the rich man had concluded that his desire would never be fulfilled. He became very happy when Lakshmi volunteered to satisfy him and asked his attendants to give Lakshmi everything that she wanted. Lakshmi returned to her house with enough food grains to feed Ramanuja and his disciples and started to prepare food for them. Varadacharya returned from his begging rounds and was surprised to see so many food grains in his house. He questioned his wife about where she managed to get so many food grains. Lakshmi told her husband about Ramanuja's arrival and her approaching the rich man to get food grains to host Ramanuja and his disciples. Instead of getting angry at Lakshmi for agreeing to satisfy the rich man's lust, Varadacharya became very happy and offered his salutations to his wife. Varadacharya said, "I beg to sustain my body so that it helps me serve the Lord but you have sacrificed your body and mind to serve our guru. Your devotion is greater than mine. A wife is supposed to derive spiritual merit due to the good deeds of her husband but, I am blessed to be your husband."

Varadacharya happily joined Lakshmi in preparing food for their guru and godbrothers. After refreshing themselves by taking a bath in the tank and performing sandhya rituals, Ramanuja and his disciples returned to Varadacharya's house and were surprised to see a lot of food that was kept ready for them. They performed their daily worship and relished the feast offered to them by Varadacharya and his wife. After resting for a while, Ramanuja and his disciples continued their pilgrimage to Tirumala.

Immediately after Ramanuja left for Tirumala, Varadacharya accompanied his wife, Lakshmi, to the rich man's house with some prasadam and thirtham, which was offered to the personal deities of Ramanuja. Lakshmi and Varadacharya

thanked the rich man for helping them host their guru and his disciples. Lakshmi said, “Sir, we are grateful to you. You can do whatever you want with me and I must submit to your desires. But, please consume this tirtham and prasadam that was offered by my guru to his deities.”

In his eagerness to attain Lakshmi, the rich man consumed some tirtham, and immediately, a sort of transformation started to happen within him. The rich man lost his desire for Lakshmi and realized the sin that he was about to commit. The rich man fell at Lakshmi’s feet and said, “O mother, you are such a virtuous soul. You were not ready to forgo your chastity even when you did not have anything to eat though I was willing to offer everything that I had to attain you. Now, you are ready to offer yourself just because I helped you host your guru. How can a sinful person like me even think of touching an exalted soul like you? You are virtuous enough to sanctify hundreds of sinners like me. Your guru should be a very great man. Please consider me to be your son and take me to your guru.”

Varadacharya and Lakshmi became very happy at the sudden transformation of the rich man. They took him to Ramanuja, who had travelled some distance towards Tirumala. The rich man fell at Ramanuja’s feet and requested Ramanuja to accept him as a disciple after narrating everything. Ramanuja too was surprised to know about everything that had happened. He once again blessed Lakshmi and Varadacharya and continued his pilgrimage.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Varadacarya-sadbhaktah – One who had a great devotee, Sri Varadacharya, as his disciple.”

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Holy Name 56: Yajnesarti-vinasakah

Mantra: Om Yajnesarti-vinasakaya Namah

Meaning – One who disentangled the sorrow of his disciple, Sri Yajnesha

Pastime – En route to Thirumala, Sri Ramanuja came to the village known as Ashtasahasra. Sri Ramanuja had two disciples in Ashtasahasra. One of them, Yajnesha, was a very rich man and the other, Varadacharya, was a great devotee who used to subsist on begging and spent most of his time contemplating the glories of the Lord. Ramanuja thought that it would become very difficult for Varadacharya, who was a very poor man, to host him and his accompanying disciples and decided to go to Yajnesha’s house. Ramanuja sent two disciples in advance to inform Yajnesha about his willingness to visit his house. Yajnesha became very excited as soon as he came to know that his guru, Ramanuja, would be visiting his house. He summoned his servants and ordered them to get whatever was necessary to host Ramanuja and asked them to cook a variety of dishes. Yajnesha also got involved in making arrangements to welcome Ramanuja and in his excitement; Yajnesha forgot to attend to the disciples who had come as messengers from Ramanuja.

The disciples returned to Ramanuja and told him about Yajnesha's eagerness to host him and the preparations that were being made at Yajnesha's house to receive him. Seeing the tired faces of his disciples, Ramanuja asked the disciples who had gone as messengers if Yajnesha attended to them properly and the disciples told him that Yajnesha was too excited to attend to them. Sri Ramanuja wants to teach his disciple Yajnesha a lesson, via this incident to the entire world, so he immediately abandons his plans to go to Yajnesha's house and decides to go directly to Varadacharya's house without informing him about their visit in advance. Meanwhile, Yajnesha made all arrangements with great pomp for receiving Sri Ramanuja, when he got the news about Sri Ramanuja's visit to the house of Sri Varadacharya and recultant to visit his house. Immeditely, Yajnesha understood his mistake and went straight to Sri Ramanuja, fell at his lotus feet and asked for forgiveness for his negligence. During this time, Sri Ramanuja instructed Yajnesha about the importance of taking care of Vaishnavas, not only serving the Lord and Acharya is important, but equally taking care of devotees of the Lord or disciples of Acharya is important. While Yajnesha repents for his mistake, he asks Sri Ramanuja and his entourage to visit his house and accept his humble services. Sri Ramanuja saw the transformation of Yajnesha's heart, so he visited Yajnesha's house along with his disciples and accepted his services and blessed him. In this way, Sri Yajnesha was freed from great offence at the lotus feet of Vaishnavas, which caused him great sorrow.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Yajnesarti-vinasakah – One who disentangled the sorrow of his disciple, Sri Yajnesha."

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Holy Name 57: Anantabhista-phaladah

Mantra: Om Anantabhista-phaladaya Namah

Meaning – One who fulfilled the heart-felt desire of Sri Anantazhwar (and in that way, he bestowed his mercy on him)

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja had visited the Thirumala Hills thrice. His maternal uncle, Periya Thirumalai Nambi gave him discourses on the Srimad Ramayana for several months at the Foot Hills of Thirumala. The temple and the surroundings were in bad shape and worship was not organized regularly. Sri Ramanuja was inspired by the Holy Hymns of the Alwars singing the glory of the Lord of the Seven Hills. He called an assembly of the Acharyas, 74 in number and posed them the question of whether any one of them would take up the task of serving the Lord on the Hills on a day-to-day basis. Everyone was hesitating, fearing the hard life up the Hills with tigers, malaria, and the forests. There was Ananthazhwar, a strong and silent devotee in the gathering. He rose to his feet and prayed, "Beloved Acharya! Bestow the blessing of serving the Lord of the Seven Hills on this humble self. With your grace, I will be happy to undertake this service. "Sri Ramanuja was mightily pleased and embracing Ananthazhwar

declared before the congregation, “Ananthazhwar, You are truly the man (Aanpillai). Ananthazhwar chose to settle down on the Hills in fulfilment of the command of the Guru Sri Ramanuja and went on to lay the garden of flowers Dug up the lake and named it after Sri Ramanuja.

Over time, Sri Ramanuja visited Tirumala hills and he was well received by his disciples and the Vaishnava clan. Sri Ramanuja took a holy dip in the Thirukkoneri and adorned himself with Urdhva Pundras. He went around the four Mada Street with all his devotees. At the southwestern corner of the temple, Ananthalvan had laid the garden, which excelled at Devaloka Nandavana (celestial garden) and named it after Ramanuja. The Sri entered the garden and found that the lake, the tank, and the garden were simply of breath-taking beauty and named after himself. Lost in the wonder and at the brilliant work executed by Ananthalvan, the Sri Ramanuja told him “My dear Ananthan Pillai, I have as my disciples so many Vaishnavas who are all Jnana-Putras but only because of you, I feel that there is a glory to me and the Vaishnavas”. He embraced Ananthalvan once again and bestowed all honours on him.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Anantabhista-phaladah – One who fulfilled the heart-felt desire of Sri Anantazhwar (and in that way, he bestowed his mercy on him).”

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Holy Name 58: Vittalesa-prapujitah

Mantra: Om Vittalesa-prapujitaya Namah

Meaning – One who was worshipped by King Vittala Deva Raya

Pastime – By the divine will of the Supreme Lord, Sri Ramanuja moved out from Sri Rangam, came to the present region of Karnataka, and stayed at the place known as Salagrama. During his stay in Salagrama, Sri Ramanuja established the temple of Lord Narasimha and his fame started to spread, and several people started to become his disciples. During that time, Salagrama and its surrounding areas were ruled by a Jain King named Bittideva (Vittala Deva). King Bittideva’s daughter was possessed by an evil spirit and the king was very embarrassed due to that because she used to walk naked everywhere. Many physicians failed to treat her and even the Jain monks and exorcists could not exorcise the evil spirit that possessed her. Once a disciple of Sri Ramanuja known as Thondanur Nambi went to the palace for alms, during then he observed that the Queen was in great sorrow, during then he asked for the reason. For which Queen explains her daughter’s condition, that time, Thondanur Nambi explains that the Brahma-rakshasa that once possessed one of the daughters of the Chola King left her as soon as Sri Ramanuja placed his lotus feet on her head and the princess was leading a normal life since then. Further, Thondanur Nambi asks the Queen to request Sri Ramanuja to come to his palace and wash his lotus feet and sprinkle that water on the body of her daughter, things will be alright. Queen offered her

respects to Thondanur Nambi and rushed to her husband King Bittideva (Vittala Deva), even though Bittideva being the Jain reluctant to do this, for his daughter's sake agreed to the proposal. King Bittideva got to know that Sri Ramanuja was staying in Salagrama and invited Ramanuja to his palace. Bittideva reverentially received Ramanuja by washing his lotus feet. He also told Sri Ramanuja about his daughter's condition and Sri Ramanuja asked Bittideva to bring his daughter. King Bittideva took the holy water and sprinkled on his daughter and brought his daughter, the evil spirit vanished as soon as she was brought to Sri Ramanuja's presence. Bittideva became very happy and prostrated before Ramanuja and requested Ramanuja to accept him as his disciple. Sri Ramanuja initiated Bittideva (Vittala Deva) and named him Vishnuvardhana. Then onwards, King Vishnuvardhana left the practices of the Jain religion, completely embraced Vaishnavism and served lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja throughout his life.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Vittalesa-prapujitah – One who was worshipped by King Vittala Deva Raya."

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Holy Name 59: Srisaila-purna-karunalabdha-ramayanarthakah

Mantra: Om Srisaila-purna-karunalabdha-ramayanarthakaya Namah

Meaning – One who obtained the meaning of Sri Ramayana literature by the grace of Srisaila Purna (Thirumalai Nambi)

Pastime – On finishing his spiritual studies at Sri Rangam, Ramanuja went on a pilgrimage to Tirumala where his maternal uncle Srishailapurna was serving Lord Srinivasa. As the glories of Tirumala are mentioned in the eleven Puranas and as nine out of the twelve Alwars had sung about the glories of Lord Srinivasa in their pashurams, Tirumala is considered to be one of the most sacred places on earth. Moreover, as Srishaila Purna was considered to be a great devotee and a good interpreter of Valmiki's Ramayana and was staying in Tirumala, Ramanuja was keen on going there. Further, as per the instructions of Sri Yamunacharya, the Guru of Srishaila Purna, he wishes to bestow the meaning of Sri Ramayana to Sri Ramanuja.

On coming to know that Ramanuja was visiting Tirumala, Srishailapurna went down the hill with some Maha-prasadam from Lord Venkateshwara's temple kitchen to receive Ramanuja. Ramanuja reached the foothill of Tirumala and offered his obeisance to the hill and the Lord. Ramanuja offered his salutations to Srishailapurna who gave him the Lord's prasadam. Ramanuja relished the prasadam and discussed the glories of Lord Srinivasa with the devotees who had come to receive him. After some time, Ramanuja turned towards Srishailapurna and said, "Sir, I am grateful to you for having blessed me with the prasadam of the Lord. Please bless me and allow me to go back as the purpose of my visit has been served."

Srishailapurna said, “How can you go away without having the darshan of the Lord?”

Ramanuja replied, “Sir, this hill is supposed to be the manifestation of Adisesha, the thousand hooded serpents of the Lord. How can I step on it when the great Alwars who are considered to be the greatest devotees did not dare to step on it?”

Srishailapurna said, “If a renounced sannyasi like you should not step on the hill, how can us householders and brahmacharis stay on this hill? All of us will stop our services to the Lord and come down to stay with you.”

Ramanuja was stunned at Srishailapurna’s reply and agreed to go to the hill and have a darshan of the Lord. As Ramanuja did not want to place his foot on the hill, he started to climb the hill on his knees. When he reached a spot called Makalla-Parvatham, Adisesha who is in the form of the hill revealed his thousand hooded forms to Ramanuja. The entire hill seemed divine and all the trees and stones on the hill seemed to be munis and rishis, who were performing different austerities to appease the Lord. Ramanuja became very happy and offered his obeisance again and again to Adisesha. After having the vision of Adisesha, Ramanuja climbed the hill on foot along with the other devotees.

After circumambulating the temple and Swami Pushkarini, the temple tank, Ramanuja entered the temple and had darshan of the Lord. Ramanuja was so captivated by the bewitching form of the Lord that he started to eulogize the Lord in mellifluous Sanskrit verses, which were later recorded and presented as Vedartha-sangraha, which means the essence of the Vedas. On Ramanuja’s request, Srishailapurna agreed to teach him the different interpretations of Valmiki’s Ramayana and the esoteric meanings enshrined in it. After staying on the hill for three days, Ramanuja climbed down the hill and started living in Tirupati.

Sri Ramanuja used to travel on foot every day to the foothill of Tirumala to learn Ramayana and Srishailapurna used to come down the hill after having finished all his services to the Lord to teach him. Once when Ramanuja and Srishailapurna were discussing some important passages from the Ramayana, the deities of Lord Rama, Mother Sita, and Lakshmana manifested themselves close to them. Srishailapurna and Ramanuja were surprised to see the deities. They tried to see if anybody had brought the deities there and on not finding even a single soul around, they understood that the deities manifested themselves and became very happy. Srishailapurna made arrangements to take the deities to Tirumala and these deities were subsequently installed in the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Venkateshwara’s temple and one can see these deities by the side of the main deity at Tirumala even today. For one year continuously, Sri Ramanuja learnt Sri Ramayana from Srishailapurna (Thirumalai Nambi).

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is known as “Srisaila-purna-karunalabdha-ramayanarthakah – One who obtained the meaning of Sri Ramayana literature by the grace of Srisaila Purna (Thirumalai Nambi).”

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Holy Name 60: Prapatti-dharmaikaratah

Mantra: Om Prapatti-dharmaikarataya Namah

Meaning – One who always engaged in the process of Surrender (Prapatti)

Pastime – Once Sri Ramanuja was talking with his sannyasi disciples, and they asked him how they would ever be able to understand the deep philosophy he had written. He said, "What I have written ultimately means simply one thing - Prapatti (surrender)." But they continued to argue that they would not be able to fully comprehend his writings. Then he told a sannyasi disciple to bring one deaf and dumb tailor who was just walking by. When the man came, Ramanuja asked them all to leave him alone with this man. So they got up and left, but one disciple looked into the room from a window outside. Ramanuja stood up and motioned to the man to touch his feet. The tailor-made full dandavats began to tremble and cry in ecstasy as he touched Ramanuja’s lotus feet. When the disciples returned, they were amazed to see this man's ecstasy, symptomatic of the highest transcendental realization. They asked, "How could such a thing like this happen to him?" Ramanuja answered, "He touched my feet in full surrender. Although he cannot understand one word of philosophy, being deaf and dumb, he has attained all perfection."

In this way, Sri Ramanuja always stressed the point of Prapatti (surrender), which was mainly stressed by Lord Krishna in his Bhagavad Gita. In all other three Yugas – Only for Males, the Bhakti Yoga was possible and Females needed to take their birth again as Males and practice the Bhakti Yoga. But, Sri Ramanuja made possible for Females the process of Surrender. Further, in other Yugas, only three Varnas (Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya) were allowed to practice Bhakti Yoga. But, Sri Ramanuja made possible for everyone, the process of Surrender, irrespective of colour, caste and creed. That is the greatness of Sri Ramanuja.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Prapatti-dharmaikaratah – One who always engaged in the process of Surrender (Prapatti).”

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Holy Name 61: Govindarya-priyanujah

Mantra: Om Govindarya-priyanujaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the dear brother of Sri Govindarya (Sri Embar)

Pastime – Sri Govindarya (Govinda) has appeared as a brother to Sri Ramanuja, he is the son of Sridevi (Who is the sister of Sri Ramanuja's mother, Bhumidevi). Both Sri Ramanuja and Sri Govinda were studying under Mayavada Guru, Sri Yadavaprakasha, in Kanchipuram. Due to Sri Ramanuja's explanations or comments against Sri Yadavaprakasha's Mayavada interpretation. Sri Yadavaprakasha plotted to kill Sri Ramanuja by taking him to Ganga Yatra by drowning him in the Ganges. So, Sri Yadavaprakasha took all his disciples along with Sri Ramanuja to the Ganga Yatra with evil intentions. During the travel, Sri Govinda overheard Yadava Prakasha and his disciples discussing their plans to kill Ramanuja. Sri Govinda liked Ramanuja more than anybody else and wanted to save him at any cost. Sri Govinda stealthily accompanied Ramanuja when he was going to wash his hands (Sandhya Vandana) and told him about Yadava Prakasha's evil intentions by indication, because Sri Yadavaprakasha not allow anyone to communicate with Sri Ramanuja in a lonely place. Sri Govinda also asked Ramanuja to escape from there as Yadava Prakasha and his trusted disciples were getting ready to kill him and went back to join Yadava Prakasha to avoid any suspicion. Ramanuja was shocked to know about Yadava Prakasha's intentions and did not know what to do. He was confused and shocked. As Govinda had already left he did not have anybody to help or guide him out of the forest. After pondering various possibilities, he finally decided to follow Govinda's advice and escaped into the thick jungle.

As Ramanuja was missing, Yadava Prakasha and his disciples started to search for him in the vicinity. As they could not find Ramanuja, they thought that some wild animal might have killed him and saved them from incurring the sin of killing a Brahmana. They also thought that Ramanuja might not find his way back even if he had lost the way as the fierce animals that lived in the forest would kill him. Though they were very happy at the disappearance of Ramanuja, Yadava Prakasha and his disciples acted as if they were overcome by sorrow to fool Govinda and continued their journey.

After escaping from the trap made by Yadava Prakasha, Sri Ramanuja returned to Kanchipuram by the mercy of Lord Varadaraja in the form of a Hunter. On coming to know about Ramanuja's return, Govinda's mother Sridevi came to see him and enquire about her son's well-being. She stayed with Ramanuja till Yadava Prakasha returned from his pilgrimage along with his disciples. After taking a bath in the Ganges at Varanasi and having the darshan of Lord Vishvanatha, Yadava Prakasha returned three months after Ramanuja to Kanchipuram. However, Govinda did not return to Kanchipuram with Yadava Prakasha and his disciples.

When Sridevi asked Yadava Prakasha about Govinda he said, "Your son is a very blessed person and Goddess Uma is very pleased with him. A sacred Shiva Linga found its way into his hands while he was taking a bath in the Ganges. Being pleased with his devotion, Lord Shiva has chosen Govinda as His dear servant. I

told Govinda that he would get everything that he needed and liberation by serving the Shiva Linga. He decided to stay near Kalahasti and spend the rest of his life in the service of the Shiva Linga, which he has installed in a piece of land that he purchased at Mangalagrama." Sridevi became very happy to know about Govinda's good fortune and immediately left for Kalahasti to see her son with the permission of Ramanuja's mother, Bhumidevi.

Yadava Prakasha, who was convinced beyond doubt that Ramanuja would not be alive, became nervous as soon as he saw him but regained his composure as he thought that Ramanuja was unaware of his evil intentions. Ramanuja humbly offered his obeisance to Yadava Prakasha who was moved by his humility. He embraced Ramanuja and said, "We were greatly pained when we found you missing and thought that you were killed by some wild beast. Though we continued our pilgrimage we were very sad for you and I am very happy after seeing you alive. Why don't you continue your studies at my school like before?"

Though Yadava Prakasha had temporarily lost his senses due to his excessive attachment to monism (Advaita or Mayavada) he had many other good qualities. Therefore, Ramanuja agreed to continue his studies under Yadava Prakasha. Ramanuja continued his service of fetching water for the Lord's ablutions though he had to dedicate a lot of time to his studies.

Although Ramanuja had taken sannyasa and become a great saint, he could not forget his cousin Govinda, who had become a great devotee of Lord Shiva and was staying at Kalahasti at the behest of Yadava Prakasha when he was a mayavadi. Moreover, Ramanuja was grateful to Govinda for having saved his life when Yadava Prakasha was planning to kill him. Yadava Prakasha accepted Vaishnavism but Govinda was still practising the mayavada philosophy, which he had learned under Yadava Prakasha. Ramanuja wanted to bring Govinda to the Vaishnava fold. Ramanuja wrote a letter to his maternal uncle Srishailapurna, who was serving Lord Venkateshwara at Tirumala Hills and sought his help. Immediately after receiving Ramanuja's letter, Srishailapurna set out to Kalahasti which is situated near Tirumala, along with a few of his disciples to bring Govinda to the Vaishnava fold.

After making some initial inquiries, Srishailapurna sat with his disciples beneath a tree on the path that Govinda used to take to fetch flowers for Lord Shiva's worship and started to give discourses on scriptures to his disciples. Govinda, who was a very inquisitive seeker, started listening to Srishailapurna's discourses which were loaded with the descriptions of the Supreme Lord's glories. Govinda was captivated by the logical explanations given by Srishailapurna and felt like embracing Vaishnavism. But, as he was already recognized as a great scholar by the mayavadis, he desisted from doing so. After the discourse was over, Govinda went to gather flowers in the fields and Srishailapurna followed him. Even as Govinda started plucking flowers Srishailapurna asked him why he was gathering flowers. Govinda said, "Dear Sir, I am a devotee of Lord Shiva and I gather flowers for his worship every day."

Srishailapurna said, “Being captivated by the glories and auspicious qualities of Lord Narayana, Lord Shiva has renounced everything and has made the burial ground his home. He smears his body with ashes to show that he is completely renounced and is always engrossed in chanting the holy names of Lord Rama. Being a detached soul, will he enjoy the fragrance of flowers? All the flowers are meant for the service of the Supreme Lord Vishnu, who is the cause of all causes and is worshipped by Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva.”

Govinda replied, “How can you differentiate between Lord Shiva and Lord Narayana? Both are the same. There are many passages in the scriptures that say that Shiva is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu.”

Both Srishailapurna and Govinda entered into a debate that lasted for a few hours. At the end of the debate, Govinda was confused and began reconsidering his beliefs. He returned to the temple to continue his services. The next day, Srishailapurna disguised himself as a mayavadi sannyasi and started watering the leaves of a plant. Being amused with the actions of the sannyasi, Govinda asked, “Swami, why are you watering the leaves instead of watering the roots? If you water the roots, the nourishment will automatically reach the leaves.”

Srishailapurna seized the opportunity and said, “When Narayana is the basis of everything and sustains everything, why are you worshipping the demigod instead of the Supreme Lord? Don’t you know that one attains everything and appeases everyone just by worshipping Lord Narayana?”

Govinda, who was hesitating to shed his mayavada garb, could no longer control himself. He rushed towards Srishailapurna and fell at his feet. Govinda requested Srishailapurna to accept him as a disciple. Srishailapurna lifted Govinda and revealed his identity to him and helped him to recollect the relationship that he shared with his maternal uncle. Govinda accompanied Srishailapurna to Tirumala and began studying the Vaishnava scriptures while staying with him.

Sri Ramanuja completed learning Ramayana from Srishailapurna within a short period. Though it is customary for the student to give a Dakshina to his guru after his studies, Srishailapurna asked Ramanuja to seek a present, being pleased with Ramanuja’s exemplary conduct. Ramanuja requested Srishailapurna to send Govinda along with him. Srishailapurna asked his disciple Govinda to accompany Ramanuja and help him in his service to the Lord. Govinda accompanied Ramanuja without even uttering a word though he was very attached to Srishailapurna. Govinda started to miss Srishailapurna’s company lost interest in everything and stopped consuming food. Very soon Govinda fell sick. Ramanuja realized the cause of Govinda’s sickness and asked him to go back to Srishailapurna. Very soon Govinda reached Tirumala and went to Srishailapurna’s house. Srishailapurna’s wife, who was standing at the portal of the house, saw Govinda coming back and became very happy. Out of excitement, she exclaimed, “Our Govinda has come back!” Srishailapurna came

out of the house and metaphorically said, “The cows that are sold to others will not become ours and we don’t feed or entertain them.”

Govinda understood the mood of his guru and went back to Sri Rangam to serve Ramanuja as told by his guru. Govinda, very soon, started to like Ramanuja and accepted him as his guru.

Govinda had become very dear to Ramanuja and everyone in the ashram started appreciating his sincerity and devotion. Govinda used to devotedly take care of everything that Ramanuja wanted and was, therefore, appreciated by Ramanuja. Govinda used to love Ramanuja and liked serving him. Once the devotees in the matha appreciated his service and started glorifying him as one of the greatest devotees they had ever seen; instead of denouncing the praise that was being showered on him following the Vaishnava etiquette, Govinda started to acknowledge the eulogy of his godbrothers. The devotees at the ashram started to think that Govinda had become egoistic and started to consider and project himself as a very advanced devotee. As days passed by, Ramanuja got to know about the devotee’s perception of Govinda’s acceptance of the praises that were showered on him. Ramanuja summoned Govinda and said, “You have started accepting the praises that are being showered on you instead of denying it humbly as a Vaishnava should do. Do you consider yourself to be a great devotee as acknowledged by you?”

Govinda said, “Worshipful sir, I am a fallen soul and had embraced Mayavada due to my ignorance. If you had not reclaimed me through Srishaila Purna due to your causeless mercy I would have been doomed. If there is anything worthy of praise in me it is only due to your causeless mercy. Therefore, whenever I acknowledge the praise showered on me by devotees I think all this belongs to my Guru and if not for his mercy no one would have even recognized me. Therefore, I don’t try to downplay or refute the praise that is showered on me as it belongs to you.”

Everyone present in the ashram was moved by Govinda’s reply and regretted having misunderstood him. Sri Ramanuja was very much appreciative of his dear brother and disciple’s mood in the devotional service.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Govindarya-priyanujah – One who is the dear brother of Sri Govindarya (Sri Embar).”

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Holy Name 62: Vyasa-sutrartha-tattvajnah

Mantra: Om Vyasa-sutrartha-tattvajnaya Namah

Meaning – One who is well aware of the right meanings of Sri Vedanta Sutra, which was compiled by Sri Vyasadeva.

Pastime – As per the desire of Sri Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja embarked upon the task of writing Sri Bhashya, a commentary on the Brahmasutras of Sage Vedavyasa. He asked Swami Kuratazhwan to write down the commentary as he dictated.

Once while dictating his commentary on one particular aphorism of Brahma-sutra, which describes the nature of the soul, Ramanuja said, “The soul is nitya (eternal) and jnata (one who knows). Therefore, the soul has cognition alone as its distinct attribute.”

As the interpretation given by Ramanuja was similar to the interpretations given by some other schools of philosophy and was not following Srila Vyasadeva’s or Sri Yamunacharya’s teachings, Kuresha stopped writing. Though Ramanuja repeatedly asked Kuresha to write whatever he dictated, Kuresha did not oblige. Ramanuja became very angry with Kuresha. Ramanuja got up and kicked Kuresha and said, “Why don’t you write the commentary by yourself if you know things better than me,” and walked away. After some time, Ramanuja realized his mistake and came back. Kuresha had not moved from there and was waiting for Ramanuja to resume his dictation. Ramanuja apologized to Kuresha and thanked Kuresha for correcting him. Ramanuja said, “If we accept the individual soul as the doer and knower it can also mean that the soul is independent and enjoys on its own and has a body. A soul cannot be independent of the Lord as the Lord pervades everything and the individual souls live in Him. Therefore, the souls are dependant on the Supreme Lord and they are his property.”

A scholar who was witnessing everything went to Kuresha after Ramanuja left and said, “Did you not feel bad when Ramanuja kicked you? Why don’t you leave him and go away?” Kuresha said, “As a disciple, I am his property. Being an ideal guru he has every right to treat me as he wants and I do not have the right to alienate him.” Kuresha resumed writing as Sri Ramanuja dictated.

As the work was in progress, during then unfortunately, Swami Kuratazhwan (Kuresha) became blind because of Chola King Krimikantachozhan. Sri Ramanuja could not continue his work on Sri Bhashya. He searched for a scholar who could help him finish the text. He got to know about a personality named, Sri Vishnu Chittha and decided that he would be the apt person to write down Sri Bhashya as he dictated. Sri Vishnu Chittha was born in the family of a Vaishnava clan known as Poorvashika in Thiruvellarai. His parents had named him ‘Sri Vishnu Chittha’ after Periyazhwar. He was about 80 years younger than Sri Ramanuja.

With the help of Sri Vishnu Chittha, Sri Ramanuja resumed his work on Sri Bhasyam and began dictating the remaining part. He was very pleased with Sri Bhashya's knowledge of Sri Vishnu Chittha. He compared him with Swami Kuratazhwan and embraced him calling him 'Engal Azhwano!' (Your knowledge equals that of our Azhwan(Kuratazhwan)). Sri Vishnu Chittha is henceforth known as Engalazhwan. Sri Ramanuja in his final days made Swami Engalazhwan a

disciple of Thirukkurukai Piran Pillan. In this way, Sri Ramanuja completed the work on Sri Bhasyam, which was duly approved by Goddess Saraswati.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Vyasa-sutrartha-tattvajnah – One who is well aware of the right meanings of Sri Vedanta Sutra, which was compiled by Sri Vyasadeva.”

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Holy Name 63: Bodhayana-matanugah

Mantra: Om Bodhayana-matanugaya Namah

Meaning – One who referred to an elaborate Sri Bodhayana commentary on Vedanta Sutra and condensed the same and wrote several literatures

Pastime – Vedavyasa is the compiler of the Brahma-sutra (Vedanta-Sutra). After composing the sutras, he thought, "The purpose for which I composed these sutras, by extracting the meaning of the Upanisads, has not become successful. Unless I personally compose a commentary, the sutras will not be understood." When he was contemplating in this way, Narada Muni appeared and instructed him to compose a commentary. Thus, Vyasadeva wrote a commentary on the Brahma sutra called the Srimad Bhagavatam. These events are described in many Puranas. Although Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana is the genuine commentary of Brahma-sutra, still, by the order of his spiritual master, the great sage Bodhayana compiled a commentary on Brahma-sutra. Therefore, there were two authorized commentaries on the Brahma sutra available in the world. Actual the Vedanta Sutra of Srila Vyasadeva had 545 Sutras (aphorisms), which were commented on by a saint Sri Bodhayana with detailed commentary for each Sutra, it ended up in 1.25 Lakh pages, it became very volumenous. So, reading the commentary of Sri Bodhayana became a difficult task. It was a great endeavour to read it for once by any human, especially in Kali-yuga.

Meanwhile, to carry on with his work in following the order of the Lord, Sri Sankara wrote a commentary on the Brahma sutra called Mayavada Bhasya and tried his best to conceal both the commentaries of Vedavyasa and Sri Bodhayana. Vedanta Sutra, which can be understood only by referring to the commentaries, so people started to refer to easily available Mayavada Bhasya and started to mislead the people. During this time appeared Sri Ramanuja, who is none other than Sri Adisesha, for the propagation of Vaishnavism. So on the order of Sri Yamunacharya and also for the benefit of entire humanity, Sri Ramanuja took up the task of commenting on the Brahma sutra. For this, Sri Ramanuja went all the way to Kashmir and by the mercy of Goddess Saraswati obtained the copy, even though it was later taken back by the King’s people, Still, with the help of his disciple Kuresha, Sri Ramanuja was able to start the work on his commentary and over time, he completed the same. Actually, understanding the difficulty of people reading Sri Bodhayana’s voluminous commentary, Sri Ramanuja condensed it and wrote a literature known as “Sri

Bhasyam", which was a very compact summary of the voluminous work. Even this "Sri Bhasyam" became difficult for some people and when they requested Sri Ramanuja, he further condensed Sri Bhasyam literature and composed a work known as "Vedanta Deepam", which literally means "The light of Vedanta". Even the lighter version was difficult for a few followers and they again requested Sri Ramanuja, further, he condensed the teachings of Sri Bhasyam or Vedanta Deepam and composed a work known as "Vedanta Saram", which literally means "The Essence of Vedanta", this literature will make even the beginners to understand the Vedanta and it's meaning in crisp.

In this way, for the benefit of the entire humanity, Sri Ramanuja took up the great task of referring to Sri Bodhayana's voluminous commentary and condensing the same and wrote several literatures. That's why, Sri Ramanuja is known as "Bodhayana-matanugah – One who referred to an elaborate Sri Bodhayana commentary on Vedanta Sutra and condensed the same and wrote several literatures."

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Holy Name 64: Sribhasyadi-maha-grantha-karakah

Mantra: Om Sribhasyadi-maha-grantha-karakaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the author of several great literature headed by Sri Bhasyam (the commentary on Sri Vedanta Sutra)

Pastime – Sri Ramanuja, who tirelessly and selflessly, engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord by the propagation of Vaishnavism far and wide. He travelled the length and breadth of the country to various places and firmly established Vaishnavism by his teachings. For propagation of Vaishnavism, Sri Ramanuja wrote several literatures, Vedartha-Sangraha (It is a treatise presenting the tenets of Visishtadvaita, a reconciliation of different conflicting srutis), Gita-Bhasya (A detailed commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita) and Nitya-Grantha (A short manual intended to guide the devotees about day to day worship and activities). Further, to fulfil the desire of his Guru Yamunacharya, at the age of 100 years, he stayed in Sri Rangam itself without much travel. During this period Sri Ramanujacharya completed his famous Vedanta-sutra commentary, the Sri Bhashya. This is Sri Ramanucharya's magnum opus work. After completing Sri Bhasyam, his followers expressed their concern to understand the same. To further simplify the explanation of Sri Bhasya, Sri Ramanuja composed Vedanta-Dipa (A brief commentary on the Vedanta Sutras) and Vedanta-Sara (Another brief commentary on the Vedanta Sutras meant for beginners). In this way, Sri Ramanuja took up the hardship to reach out the difficult to access and understand Vedanta-sutra to the common people.

After making many efforts to wake people from material nescience, Sri Ramanuja decided to compose a few more literatures, but this time the literatures was not related to Vedanta or Vedas, but the literatures that deals with Surrender

(Prapatti). The month of (March – April) in Tamil (Panguni) is sacred in Sri Rangam, as it is the appearance month of Lord Ranganatha on Panguni Revathi and Goddess Sri Ranganayaki Thayar on Panguni Uthiram both occur during this month. Only on this day, both Goddess Ranganayaki and Lord Ranganatha, the divine couples of Srirangam are seen together in Utsava (festivity). The festivity takes place at the royal court located at the western entrance of the great shrine of Lord Ranganatha. Incredibly Sri Ramanuja chose this blessed day for reciting the wonderful hymns the Gadya Trayam- Saranagathi Gadyam (A prayer of complete surrender to the lotus feet of Lord Narayana.), Sriranga Gadyam (Manuals of self-surrender to Lord Narayana) and Vaikunta Gadyam (Describes Sri Vaikuntha-loka and the position of the liberated souls), unambiguously outlining the doctrine of Surrender. Sri Ramanuja offered his surrender at the lotus feet of divine couples (Lord Ranganatha and Goddess Ranga Nayaki) by offering prayers in the form of Gadya Tryam, later these three compositions of Sri Ramanuja became part of his works. The point to be noted is that Sri Ramanuja offered his surrender at the lotus feet of divine couples for the benefit of all the conditioned souls, and also for their deliverance from material existences. Lord Ranganatha and Goddess Ranga Nayaki accepted the surrender of his dear servant Sri Ramanuja, who is none other than Adisesha. After performing this surrender, Sri Ramanuja started to completely immerse himself in the meditation on the lotus feet of Lord Ranganatha, shortly after this, Sri Ramanuja left his transcendental body and attained the lotus feet of Lord Narayana. In this way, Sri Ramanuja by his teachings in the form of Sri Bhasya and other literatures explained the world the process of Surrender and at last, he practically demonstrated the process of Surrender by himself surrendering at the lotus feet of Lordships.

So, the nine works of Sri Ramanuja, which are known as Navaratnas,

1. Vedanta Sangraha
2. Nitya Granta
3. Gita Bashyam
4. Sri Bashyam
5. Vedanta Dipa
6. Vedanta Sara
7. Saranagathi Gadya
8. Sriranga Gadya
9. Srivaikunta Gadya

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Sribhasyadi-maha-grantha-karakah – One who is the author of several great literature headed by Sri Bhasyam (the commentary on Sri Vedanta Sutra).”

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Holy Name 65: Kalinasanah

Mantra: Om Kalinasanaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the subduer of the influence of Kali-yuga, the age of hypocrisy and quarrel

Pastime – In Tiruvaymoli (5.2.1), a section of the Divya Prabandha, Sri Nammazhwar sung,

poliga poliga poliga! poyitru valluyir ccapam
naliyum naragamum nainda namanukkingu yadonrum illai
kaliyum kedum kandu kolmin kadalvannan budangal manmel
maliya ppugundisai padi adi ulidara kkandom

Meaning: Victory! Victory! Victory! I behold something wonderful: all the inauspiciousness of the living entities is destroyed, no one is going to hell, Yamaraja has no more work, and the effects of Kaliyuga cease to exist. This is because all over the world an increasing number of Lord Vishnu's devotees sing his names while dancing and playing musical instruments.

Once when Sri Ramanuja was explaining the meanings of Thiruvaimozhi verses to Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan, who is like his dear son. While explaining this “poliga poliga” verse, Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan was filled with ecstasy and emotions. Noticing that Sri Ramanuja asked him what caused these changes in his emotions. Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan replies “Azhwar hailed ‘kaliyum kedum kandu konmin ‘, which means the bad effect of Kali Yuga will be destroyed, with your appearance. I thought in my heart that as per his declaration, you have revealed that you are that great Acharya. Whenever you explained Thiruvaimozhi Verses. Thinking about this, I am unable to control my ecstasy and emotions thinking that I am so fortunate to have a direct relationship with such a great Acharya, who is glorified by Nammazhwar in his glorious verses and to hear the divine meanings of Thiruvaimozhi from your divine self directly is a blessing”. Hearing this, Sri Ramanuja was very pleased.

That night, Sri Ramanuja invites Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan to his Ashram and brings him near to his worshipable deity, Lord Perarulalan and holds the deity in his hand and places the lotus feet of the deity on the head of Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan and tells him “Always depend on these lotus feet as your refuge; Always show these as the refuge to the ones who surrender unto you as well. Tomorrow, you start writing a commentary to Thiruvaimozhi verses of Nammazhwar.” Thus, Sri Ramanuja revealed the secret of his appearance to Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan, who is very dear to him. Following the footsteps of Sri Ramanuja, many glorious Acharyas appeared on the surface of the earth and spread the message of Vaishnavism around the world. Prominent of all of them is “A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada”, who took the principles of all the Acharyas, especially Sri Ramanuja, to the entire world.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Kalinasanah – One who is the subduer of the influence (bad effect) of Kali-yuga, the age of hypocrisy and quarrel.”

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Holy Name 66: Advaita-matavicchetre

Mantra: Om Advaita-matavicchetre Namah

Meaning – One who condemned the teachings of Mayavada (Advaitavada)

Pastime – In Kanchipuram, Sri Ramanuja was studying under Sri Yadava Prakasha. Once, Yadava Prakasha started to interpret famous Upanishad passages – “*sarvam kalau idam brahma*” and “*tajjalan*”. Being a staunch follower of Advaita philosophy, he started to interpret the text by their literal meaning. Interpreting the first passage, he said everything here is Brahman and there is no doubt. Whoever sees anything other than Brahman is seeing it due to an erroneous conception. The second passage *tajjalan* also substantiates that conclusion by saying that is water. Yadava Prakasha quoted many advaitic scholars to substantiate his philosophical conclusions. Yadava Prakasha’s exposition was such that everyone in the gathering except Ramanuja was impressed.

Ramanuja approached Yadava Prakasha after he finished his discourse and said, “Sir both the passages do not deny the existence of the living beings and *prakriti* (material nature) while declaring Brahman to be omnipresent. The phrase “*neha nasti kinchana*” that you used to substantiate your philosophy does not say Brahman is without any qualities but declares that He is not tainted by the qualities of material nature. Though water pervades the entire ocean, the fish and plants live in water. When someone says all this is water by pointing at the ocean he does not deny the existence of the fish and plants. Moreover, fish and plants cannot be called as water as they have names and forms. Similarly, we live in all-pervading Brahman. Therefore, the perception of individual souls and material nature is not based on erroneous conception.”

Being an ardent follower of Advaita, Yadava Prakasha was not willing to listen to Ramanuja’s interpretation as it was against the philosophy propounded by him and his preceptors. Yadava Prakasha became annoyed and said, “Sir, you seem to be more qualified than me and all the great preceptors who preceded me as all of them have interpreted the scriptures as I have done today. If you are not willing to accept my interpretation of the scriptures, please do not come here. You start your school and interpret the scriptures as you like.”

Ramanuja was fed up with Yadava Prakasha’s tantrums and he decided to study the scriptures by himself. Ramanuja started giving discourses on scriptures and people started to gather around him. The news of Ramanuja parting ways with Yadava Prakasha reached Kanchipurna and he became very happy.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Advaita-matavicchetre – One who condemned the teachings of Mayavada (Advaitavada).”

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Holy Name 67: Visistadvaita-paragah

Mantra: Om Visistadvaita-paragaya Namah

Meaning – One who intensely propagated the Visistadvaita Siddhanta

Pastime – Once Yamunacharya visited Kanchipuram to have the darshan of Lord Varadaraja, in the temple, he saw Mayavadi scholar Yadava Prakasha coming to the temple with his arms around Sri Ramanuja, who was then studying under Yadava Prakasha. Sri Yamunacharya was captivated by Ramanuja’s personality and the spiritual lustre on his face and inquired about him from his disciples. Sri Yamunacharya was happy to know that Sri Ramanuja had refuted Mayavada by writing a commentary on “*satyam jnanam anantham brahma*,” a famous passage from Taittiriya Upanishad, which describes the Lord as Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity.

As Yamunacharya was searching for a worthy successor, who could save the Vaishnavas from the onslaught of Mayavada philosophers, re-establish the glory of Vaishnava philosophy and spread the Visistadvaita Siddhanta across the country, he felt like talking to Sri Ramanuja, who was devoted to the Lord and was not willing to accept the philosophy of Yadava Prakasha. However, he refrained from doing so to avoid getting into an argument with Yadava Prakasha, who used to despise Vaishnava philosophy due to his excessive attachment to the Mayavada philosophy. Being concerned about Sri Ramanuja’s future, Sri Yamunacharya went again to the shrine of Lord Varadaraja and offered his prayers to the Lord, requesting Him to bring Sri Ramanuja into the Vaishnava fold and left for Sri Rangam, where he was looking after the Deity worship and temple administration of Lord Ranganatha’s temple. As desired by Sri Yamunacharya, by the special blessings and sanction of Lord Varadaraja, Sri Ramanuja accepted the Vaishnava fold by rejecting Mayavadi Yadava Prakasha and took renounced order of life from Lord Varadaraja himself and became the head of Visistadvaita Vaishnava fold, which is also known as Sri Sampradaya, and propagated the philosophy of Visistadvaita, to the nook and corner of the country. Practically speaking, because of Sri Ramanuja only, the Visistadvaita philosophy spread everywhere, before Sri Ramanuja no one did it to that extent and after Sri Ramanuja, no one did it to that extent. All these were possible, because of Sri Yamunacharya’s (who was a prominent Acharya in Visistadvaita Sampradaya) grace and prayers to Lord Varadaraja.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Visistadvaita-paragah – One who intensely propagated the Visistadvaita Siddhanta.”

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Holy Name 68: Kuranga-nagari-purna-mantra-ratnopadesikah

Mantra: Om Kuranga-nagari-purna-mantra-ratnopadesikaya Namah

Meaning – One who bestowed the Dwaya Mantra to Lord Azhagiya Nambi, the predominating deity of Thirukkurungudi

Pastime – Once Sri Ramanuja visited Thirukkurungudi and had the darshan of Lord Azhagiya Nambi. After darshan when Sri Ramanuja was leaving for his residence, Supreme Lord Azhagiya Nambi asked Sri Ramanuja how he propagates his (Lord's) glories and spreads Vaishnavisam and people are hearing him and not me (Lord), because Supreme Lord also incarnated several times and bestowed knowledge to the mankind in the form of Bhagavad-Gita, Uddhava-Gita, etc... For which, Sri Ramanuja replied to Lord Azhagiya Nambi, "Oh Lord, I will tell you the secret," and requested the Lord to accept him as an Acharya and give him the seat and Lord Azhagiya Nambi, gave the seat to Sri Ramanuja and as a disciple, he enquires from Sri Ramanuja and Sri Ramanuja tells that "It is very simple When you appear and impart the knowledge in the form of Bhagavad Gita, Uddhava Gita, etc… in that you are telling that you are great, so people are not appreciating your instruction, because in general people will not appreciate someone glorifies himself. But, when I go to people and tell them that, you are great (Lord Vishnu is great), people accept it, It is common psychology." Lord Azhagiya Nambi was mesmerized by his dear servant Sri Ramanuja and also to show the world how much he loves Sri Ramanuja, Lord Azhagiya Nambi requested the Mantra Upadesha like a disciple. Understanding the divine pastime and reciprocation of Supreme Lord Azhagiya Nambi, Sri Ramanuja initiated Lord Azhagiya Nambi with Dwaya Mantra and gave his new noble disciple with the names, Sri Ramanuja Nambi and Sri Vaishnava Nambi.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Kuranga-nagari-purna-mantra-ratnopadesikah – One who bestowed the Dwaya Mantra to Lord Azhagiya Nambi, the predominating deity of Thirukkurungudi."

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Holy Name 69: Vinasitetaramatah

Mantra: Om Vinasitetaramataya Namah

Meaning – One who condemned the unscrupulous meanings given to Vedas by unauthorized followers

Pastime – Swami Nanjeeyar's original name was Madhava Acharya. Since he had an outstanding knowledge of the Vedantas, he was called a Vedanti. He was renowned as an Acharya in the Advaitic tradition initially. Sri Ramanuja before leaving this world called Parasara Bhattar and told him about Vedanti and asked

that Parasara Bhattar correct him and bring him into the Vaishnava fold. This shows the greatness of Swami Nanjeeyar. Sri Ramanuja had already done a similar act with the Advaiti Yajnamurti, who was renamed Arulala Perumal Emperumanar. However, due to old age, Sri Ramanuja was unable to do the same with Madhava Acharya and therefore gave the task to Parasara Bhattar.

As Vedanti, Swami Nanjeeyar lived with great fame in Thirunarayanapuram. Once a Vaishnava from Sri Rangam met him and told him about Parasara Bhattar's greatness. From that time on, Vedanti was eager to meet Parasara Bhattar. When the Vaishnava met Parasara Bhattar and told him about the incident, Parasara Bhattar asked him what he told Vedanti. The Vaishnava replied that he told Vedanti that Parasara Bhattar knew all the scriptures. Parasara Bhattar then told the Brahmin that he should have told Vedanti that Parasara Bhattar also knew Thirunedunthandagam, the Composition of Thirumangai Azhwar. The next time the Vaishnava met Vedanti he repeated that to him. Vedanti was then wondering about this work that he had not come across before.

One of the highlights of Parasara Bhattar’s life is, he is going to Thirunarayanapuram (Melukote) and his debate with a Scholar. It was Lord Vishnu’s divine order that Advaithi Scholar Madhava Acharya should be reformed. Parasara Bhattar goes all the way to Thirunarayanapuram (Melukote) in his palanquin with the grand procession of Vaishnavas to debate with Advaithi Madhava Acharya on Philosophy. Eventually, Parasara Bhattar was stopped and suggested that going with a grand procession would not be favourable as the disciples of Advaithi Madhava Acharya would stop him and just delay him from meeting him forever. So Parasara Bhattar changes to a very simple attire and goes to the Prasadam serving hall of Advaithi Madhava Acharya. The Hall is maintained by Advaithi Madhava Acharya to serve the people food, so no one will go hungry in the village that is the dedication of Advaithi Madhava Acharya in terms of serving the devotees and Brahmanas.

When Parasara Bhattar visited the hall of Advaithi Madhava Acharya, he waited there without eating and the news was taken to Advaithi Madhava Acharya taking note of it, Advaithi Madhava Acharya came to him and asked him why he did not eat and what he wants. Parasara Bhattar says he wants to debate with him. Advaithi Madhava Acharya having heard about Parasara Bhattar before quickly realizes this to Parasara Bhattar that since no one will have the guts to challenge him, he engages with Parasara Bhattar for a debate. Parasara Bhattar first uses Thirunedunthantakam to establish the Supremacy of Lord Vishnu and subsequently presents all the meanings from the scriptures. Advaithi Madhava Acharya accepts the defeat and falls at the lotus feet of Parasara Bhattar and accepts him as Acharya. Parasara Bhattar gives him specific instructions and teaches him etiquettes of Vaishnava Sampradaya initiates him with Vaishnava Diksha and gives him the name Ranganatha, later he got the name Nanjeeyar. Later, Nanjeeyar became his successor.

Then Parasara Bhattar takes leave from him and goes to Sri Rangam on the day before the start of Adhyayana Utsava (The Grand Festival of Sri Rangam Temple). There is a grand welcome arranged in Sri Rangam for Parasara Bhattar. Parasara Bhattar goes to the shrine of Lord Ranganatha and he narrates in front of the Lord, the whole incident between Advaithi Madhava Acharya and him. Lord Ranganatha being very pleased orders Parasara Bhattar to recite Thirunedunthantagam and this is made a custom ever after that in Sri Rangam – the Adhyayana utsava in Sri Rangam starts with the recital of Thirundenthantagam.

Ananthalvan was attached to Kuratalvan's son Parasara Bhattar. When Parasara Bhattar was on his way to Melkote to win over Advaithi Madhava Acharya and to make him his disciple, he was received by Ananthalvan at Siruputtur. Ananthalvan enquired of him why he undertook such an arduous journey. Parasara Bhattar explained to him that it was in fulfilment of Sri Ramanuja's wishes that he was on this tour to convert Vedanti to the Philosophy of Vaishnavism. Ananthalvan who was throughout with Parasara Bhattar Having recognized him as the leader of the Vaishnava clan, returned only after Parasara Bhattar won over Advaithi Madhava Acharya in the debate. Parasara Bhattar came to be finally recognized as the king of Vaishnavas, next to Sri Ramanuja.

Till the end of his physical presence in this world, Sri Ramanuja constantly endeavoured to subdue the people, who were giving unscrupulous meanings to Vedas, after his time, Sri Ramanuja entrusted his followers to do the same, as in this case, on the order of Sri Ramanuja, Sri Parasara Bhattar won over Advaithi Madhava Acharya. For this reason, Sri Ramanuja is known as "Vinasitetaramatah – One who condemned the unscrupulous meanings given to Vedas by unauthorized followers".

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Holy Name 70: Sesikrta-ramapatah

Mantra: Om Sesikrta-ramapataye Namah

Meaning – One who reclaimed the fallen conditioned souls, who are eternal servants of the Supreme Lord, and returned them to Lord Narayana, who is the consort of Goddess Lakshmi

Pastime – Once, Sri Ramanuja was on a pilgrimage to Thiruvali Thirunagari and the surrounding Divyadesams. On the way stood an illiterate woman belonging to a lower order in society. To avoid her, Sri Ramanuja commanded her to step aside until he crossed the way. The lady surprised him with the following questions: "Sir, to which side shall I move? Here before me stands Thy Holy Self, a Brahmin, whom I cannot approach lest I pollute thee by my nearness; Behind me, is the Holy shrine of Thirukannapuram; to my right are the Thirumanam Kollai where Saint Thirumanagai waylaid the Lord and Thiruvarasu (the Peepul Tree) used by the Saint as his watchtower and to my left is Thiruvali Manavalan.

There is thus purity all around me here, which side then can my impurity turn?" Sri Ramanuja was struck by that and pleaded forgiveness. He administered to her the holy Vaishnava sacraments and allotted her a place in the shrine, where her deity is seen and revered by all the pilgrims to this day.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sesikrta-ramapatah – One who reclaimed the fallen conditioned souls, who are eternal servants of the Supreme Lord, and returned them to Lord Narayana, who is the consort of Goddess Lakshmi."

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Holy Name 71: Putrikrta-satharatah

Mantra: Om Putrikrta-satharataye Namah

Meaning – One who accepted his disciple, Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan, as his dear son

Pastime – Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan is the illustrious son of Periya Thirumalai Nambi. Sri Ramanuja himself gave the name to him and instructed him to write the first commentary for Thiruvaimozhi verses of Nammazhwar, which became popularly known as the 6000 Padi commentary. Sri Ramanuja considers Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan as his dear son.

Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan was an expert in both Sri Bhashyam and Bhagavat Vishayam. Once when Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan was at Siruppuththur, Somasiyandan learned Sri Bhashyam thrice from him. Then, Somasiyandan asks Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan to give him some valuable instructions and Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan says "You are an expert in explaining other philosophies and establish the Vaishnava philosophy through Sri Bhashyam. Instead of being proud of that, always think that the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja are our only refuge all the time." That is the surrender and love, Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan had for his Guru, Sri Ramanuja.

While ascending to Sri Vaikunta, Sri Ramanuja asks Kidambi Achan, Kidambi Perumal, Engalazhwan, Nadathurazhwan, etc… to be surrendered to Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan and asks Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan to guide them. Sri Ramanuja also asks Parasara Bhattar to guide everyone including Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan and lead the entire Vaishnava Community in his absence. Also, since Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan was considered by Sri Ramanuja himself as his son, he led all the final rites for Sri Ramanuja.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Putrikrta-satharatah – One who accepted his disciple, Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan, as his dear son."

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Holy Name 72: Sathajit-Rnamoksakah

Mantra: Om Sathajit-Rnamoksakaya Namah

Meaning – One who tries to repay his spiritual obligation to Sri Nammazhwar

Pastime – Once many disciples of Sri Ramanuja went to Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan and requested Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan for requesting Sri Ramanuja to write a commentary for Thiruvaimozhi verses of Nammazhwar. Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan goes to the assembly of Sri Ramanuja, offers his obeisances, and starts speaking. He says to Sri Ramanuja "You have written Sri Bhashyam (the commentary on Vedanta Sutra) and travelled everywhere and established the philosophy of Vaishnavism. Now, we request you to write commentaries to Azhwars' Pasurams (Verses) and protect them as well, so others don't misinterpret the same." Hearing this Sri Ramanuja replies "Yes, that is required. But if I write a commentary on Azhwars' Pasurams (Verses), people with limited intelligence will consider that there is only so much in Azhwars' works. And no one else will dare to write a commentary beyond mine. That will be an offense towards the great works of Azhwars which are filled with great meanings which can be revealed by many authentic Acharyas in the future. So, I will instruct you to write the first commentary for Thiruvaimozhi which is equivalent in size to Sri Vishnu Purana (6000 Sholkas – 6000 Padi)." Thus with the permission of Sri Ramanuja, Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan wrote 6000 Padi or Verses commentary, and subsequently, this was taught by Parasara Bhattar to Nanjeeyar.

Pleased by the work of Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan, Sri Ramanuja took the work and offered it to Sri Nammazhwar, who is in his deity form. After going through the manuscript, Sri Nammazhwar was very pleased with the commentary and appreciated Sri Ramanuja for his expertise in training disciples and getting such expert disciples as Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan. Further, Sri Nammazhwar blessed Sri Ramanuja by providing eternal shelter at his lotus feet. In this way, Sri Ramanuja fulfils his spiritual obligation to Sri Nammazhwar and also the promise which made to Sri Yamunacharya.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sathajit-Rnamoksakah – One who tries to repay his spiritual obligation to Sri Nammazhwar."

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Holy Name 73: Bhasadatta-hayagrivah

Mantra: Om Bhasadatta-hayagrivaya Namah

Meaning – One who obtained the deity of Lord Hayagriva from Goddess Saraswati

Pastime – According to the scriptures, Lord Brahma emerged from the sattva guna (mode of goodness) of the Supreme Lord; and the two demons, Madhu and Kaitaba emerged out of the Rajo (mode of passion) and Tamo gunas (mode of ignorance) of the Lord respectively at the start of creation. As Brahma was born out of the mode of goodness, he was naturally inquisitive. He started pondering over the purpose of his birth and other things. Brahma searched the entire lotus on which he was born to see if he could find any answers to the questions that were bothering him. Brahma failed to find any answers to his questions and he entered the stem of the lotus to further his quest. Brahma could not reach the source of the stem or find answers to his questions. He once again came to the top of the lotus and dived into the open space around it. Brahma fell into an endless ocean. As his questions remained unanswered, Brahma once again went back to the lotus as he was feeling comfortable there. Even as Brahma continued to think about his source, an ethereal voice said “Tapa” and Brahma, due to his good samskara, understood it as austerity and devoted contemplation. Brahma started to perform severe austerities.

After some time, the Supreme Lord appeared before Lord Brahma and said, “I am the cause and source of everything including you. Due to the good actions committed by you in your previous births, I entrust you with the responsibility of creating this material universe. Accept these Vedas, i.e., knowledge, and start performing your duties of creating the material universe.”

Thus, the Supreme Lord imparted the Vedas to Brahma and vanished from there even as Brahma was engrossed in soaking in the unmatched beauty of the glorious form of the Lord. Lord Brahma started understanding the Vedas to start the work entrusted to him. Madhu and Kaitaba came there and were impressed with the Vedas in the hands of Lord Brahma. Madhu and Kaitaba fought with Brahma, snatched the Vedas from him, and went into the nether worlds. Brahma could not do anything after he lost the Vedas. Therefore, Brahma once again started to perform austerities.

Being impressed with Lord Brahma’s austerity and devotion, the Supreme Lord once again appeared before him and asked him the cause of his misery. Lord Brahma narrated everything that had happened and requested the Lord to protect him from Madhu and Kaitaba.

The Supreme Lord reached the planet in which Madhu and Kaitaba were hiding. The Lord assumed the form of a horse and started neighing loudly. The intensity of His neighing was such that the entire world began to shake and frightening sounds began to reverberate from the horizons. Madhu and Kaitaba got frightened and ran away leaving the Vedas behind.

The Lord took the Vedas and handed it over to Lord Brahma, who became very happy. Lord Brahma started to create the material world and the Supreme Lord vanished from there. As the Lord returned the Vedas in the form of Hayagriva, Lord Brahma began to worship Hayagriva with devotion and started to consider

Lord Hayagriva as the source of knowledge. Lord Brahma gave the Hayagriva deity to his wife Sarasvati when he imparted Vedic knowledge to her and told her that her knowledge would be perfected by worshipping Hayagriva. Sarasvati passed on the same deity to Ramanuja after keeping it in her possession for a very long time, when she was pleased by Sri Ramanuja's commentary on Vedanta Sutra. The deity that was given to Sri Ramanuja by Goddess Sarasvati is being worshipped at Parakala Mutt in Mysore even today.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Bhasadatta-hayagrivah – One who obtained the deity of Lord Hayagriva from Goddess Saraswati."

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Holy Name 74: Bhasyakarah

Mantra: Om Bhasyakaraya Namah

Meaning – One who is entitled by Goddess Saraswati as "Sri Bhasyakara"

Pastime – To fulfil the desire of Sri Yamunacharya, Sri Ramanuja wished to work on a commentary on Brahma-sutra, so went to Kashmir to obtain a copy of the Brahma-sutra, but the Mayavada scholars understanding the purpose of Sri Ramanuja played dirty tricks and sent him away. But, Goddess Saraswati appeared to Sri Ramanuja during nighttime provided him with a copy of the Brahma sutra and asked him to leave immediately. So with the blessings of Goddess Sarasvati, Ramanuja, and his disciple, Kuresha, left for Sri Rangam in the middle of the night carrying a copy of Brahma sutras along with them. After a couple of days, the king's men started rearranging the books that were written on palm leaves after checking if they were infested with worms. To their astonishment, they could not find a copy of Brahma-sutras, which is compiled by Sage Veda Vyasa. They brought this to the notice of the king and the court scholars. Everyone in the king's court was shocked. After holding some deliberations with the scholars, the king thought that the scholars who had come from South India might have stolen the copy of Brahma-sutras. The king sent courtiers in all directions to trace Ramanuja and Kuresha and to bring the text back to the library.

One of the teams sent by the king found Ramanuja and Kuresha and inquired about the book from them. The king's men snatched the book from Ramanuja after finding it in his possession and went back to hand it over to the king. Ramanuja was disappointed and started to lament over losing the book. Kuresha said, "Sir you need not worry about the book as I have completely memorized it. I used to study and memorize the text after you went to sleep every night. I know the entire text by heart and I will write it down immediately to ensure that I do not forget anything."

Ramanuja became very happy as he trusted Kuresha's memory. Kuresha was blessed with the ability to remember even the most complex Vedic texts just by listening to them or reading them once. Ramanuja hugged Kuresha and directed him to write down the text immediately. Ramanuja and Kuresha resumed their journey after Kuresha finished writing the text of Brahma-sutras on the palm leaves and compiled it in book form. Ramanuja reached Sri-Rangam and the entire town gathered at his monastery to welcome him. Addressing the devotees, Ramanuja said, "If we have a copy of Brahma sutras with us it is due to Kuresha. If he had not memorized the text of Brahma-sutras before the king's men snatched the book from us, I might not have had an opportunity to write a commentary on the sutras. I might have failed to fulfil my promise to Yamunacharya! I will have to refute the Mayavadis, who say that knowing the meaning of texts like *aham brahmasmi* and *tat tvam asi* is sufficient to attain liberation and claim that the Supreme Brahman is devoid of any qualities, and those who consider dry ritualism, austerity, charity, and Karma as the only means to liberation. I will establish the philosophy propounded by the alwars, Nathamuni and Yamunacharya while writing the commentary besides establishing Bhakti, unconditional love, meditation, and worship as the only means to attain the Lord and liberation as advocated by the scriptures."

Looking towards Kuresha, who was sitting by his side, Ramanuja said, "Kuresha will help me in writing the commentary by being my scribe. As Kuresha knows most of the Vedic texts by heart he will also correct me if I go wrong by not writing the passages that he thinks are wrong and bring them to my notice for my reconsideration."

Sri Ramanuja started to write the commentary with the help of his disciple, Kuresha. Their work was going on smoothly till Ramanuja had some doubts about the nature of the individual soul while refuting the Mayavada description, which says that there is only one soul and its essential nature is the ability to know. Ramanuja sent Kuresha to his guru, Ghostipurna, to get the doubts clarified. When Kuresha informed about Ramanuja's doubts about Ghostipurna, Ghostipurna said, "Remind him about Nammalwar's hymn in which he says that the soul is a slave of the Lord. Let him always remember the fact that dependence on the Lord precedes every other quality including jnatrutva, the ability to know, of the soul." Ramanuja resumed writing his commentary after receiving the clarification from Ghostipurna.

Once while dictating his commentary on one particular aphorism of Brahma-sutra, which describes the nature of the soul, Ramanuja said, "The soul is nitya (eternal) and jnata (one who knows). Therefore, the soul has cognition alone as its distinct attribute."

As the interpretation given by Ramanuja was similar to the interpretations given by some other schools of philosophy and did not follow Yamunacharya's teachings, Kuresha stopped writing. Though Ramanuja repeatedly asked Kuresha to write whatever he dictated, Kuresha did not oblige. Ramanuja became very

angry with Kuresha. Ramanuja got up and kicked Kuresha and said, “Why don’t you write the commentary by yourself if you know things better than me,” and walked away. After some time, Ramanuja realized his mistake and came back. Kuresha had not moved from there and was waiting for Ramanuja to resume his dictation. Ramanuja apologized to Kuresha and thanked Kuresha for correcting him. Ramanuja said, “If we accept the individual soul as the doer and knower it can also mean that the soul is independent and enjoys on its own and has a body. A soul cannot be independent of the Lord as the Lord pervades everything and the individual souls live in Him. Therefore, the souls are dependant on the Supreme Lord and they are his property.”

A scholar who was witnessing everything went to Kuresha after Ramanuja left and said, “Did you not feel bad when Ramanuja kicked you? Why don’t you leave him and go away?”

Kuresha said, “As a disciple, I am his property. Being an ideal guru he has every right to treat me as he wants and I do not have the right to alienate him.”

Kuresha resumed writing and, very soon, Sri Ramanuja completed his commentary on Brahma sutras and named it Sri Bhashya as instructed by Goddess Sarasvati, also Sri Ramanuja being the Acharya of Sri Sampradaya. Sri Bhashya is accepted as one of the most authoritative commentaries on Brahma sutras by all schools of Indian philosophy. Any study of Indian philosophy would be incomplete without a careful analysis of Sri Bhashya as its influence can be seen in all the commentaries written on Brahma-sutras after Ramanuja.

Further, after completing the commentary on Sri Bhasya, Sri Ramanuja travelled across the country. During the course of his journey, he came to Kashmir. In Kashmir, Goddess Sarasvati appeared before Sri Ramanuja and read the Sri Bhashya commentary written by Sri Ramanuja and was very much pleased by the presentation of Sri Ramanuja called him Bhashyakara, i.e., one who has written a Bhashyam or a commentary. Since then Sri Ramanuja came to be known as Bhashyakara. Goddess Sarasvati also handed over her personal Hayagriva deity, which is one of the forms of the Lord, to Sri Ramanuja as a mark of appreciation.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Bhasyakarah – One who is entitled by Goddess Saraswati as “Sri Bhasyakara”.”

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Holy Name 75: Mahayasase

Mantra: Om Mahayasase Namah

Meaning – One whose glories or fame spread far and wide

Pastime – In Sri Ranganatha Stotram composition by Parasara Bhattar, he states (verse 8),

shriranggam karishailamanjjanagirim tarkshyadri simhachalau
shrikurmam purushottamam cha badarinarayanam naimisham
shrimaddvaravati prayagamathurayodhyagaya: pushkaram
salagramagirim nishevya ramate ramanujozyam muni

Meaning: Sri Ramanuja, who spread Vaishnavism across the country by travelling to Sri Rangam, Vishnu Kanchi, Thiruppathi, Tharkshyagiri, Simhachala, Sri Koorma, Jagannatha Puri, Badrinath, Naimisarnya, Dwaraka, Prayaga, Mathura, Ayodhya, Gaya, Pushkara, and Salagrama (Muktinath) and firmly established the Vaishnavism. Let him become pleased with this composition (Sri Ranganatha Stotram).

After completing Sri-Bhasya, Sri Ramanuja along with his disciples travelled across the country and eventually came to Kashmir and refuted various Mayavada scholars. There, the court scholar along with the other Mayavadi scholars, who were envious of Ramanuja, started a sacrifice to kill and began chanting mantras, which had the power to destroy or kill a person, whom the chanters desired to be killed. However, the effect of the mantras rebounded and the priests who were performing the rituals started falling sick. The king of Kashmir got to know about the plight of his guru and other Mayavadi scholars. He rushed to Ramanuja's presence along with the scholars and fell at his feet to seek his forgiveness. The king and his court scholars became the disciples of Ramanuja and were cured of the deadly disease that afflicted them. By this incident, Sri Ramanuja's fame spread far and wide.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Mahayasase – One whose glories or fame spread far and wide."

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Holy Name 76: Pavitrikrta-bhubhagah

Mantra: Om Pavitrikrta-bhubhagaya Namah

Meaning – One who purified the places, wherever he visited, by his holy presence

Pastime – Once there were demons named, Madhu and Kaitabha, who were become the distribuance for the demigods and Mother Earth. They possessed great power and subduing them was impossible. Understanding the situation, Lord Vishnu appeared as Hayagriva, the horse incarnation, and by transcendental tricks smashed both demons, it is said that the fat (medha) from their dead bodies fell on the earth, which nourished the earth. The earth became an abundant stream of wealth, because of their fat (medas) and from then on she (Bhumi) has been known as Medini (earth having the fat of fertility). Further,

it is said that the fat from the dead bodies of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha formed the seismic plates (also called tectonic plates), that are part of the earth's crust. The Hayagriva-Mahatmyam says that the bodies of Madhu and Kaitabha disintegrated into twelve pieces (two heads, two torsos, four arms and four legs) and transformed into the twelve original seismic plates that cover the earth. Even though the earth was nourished, still, because of the fat of the demons, the earth became contaminated. So, Goddess Bhumi-devi (Earth personified) offered her prayers to Supreme Lord Vishnu to purify her from the contamination. Lord Vishnu is pleased by her prayers and states, "Oh Bhum-devi, Adisesha will incarnate on the earth regularly and due to his presence and travel across the globe. You will get purified." Accordingly, Adisesha, who is always in the service of Lord Vishnu, appeared on the earth in several incarnations and walked across the globe and purified the earth, like Lakshmana (along with Rama travelled across the country with foot), Balarama (travelled across the country during the time of Kurukshetra and other time too), Sri Ramanuja (travelled across the country several times for propagation of Vaishnavism), Manavala Mamunigal (travelled across the country several times for propagation of Vaishnavism), Vishvarupa (After taking Sannyasa, travelled across the country), Lord Nityananda (Being Avadhuta, travelled across the country several times), etc… all these incarnations of Adisesha travelled extensively across the Earth for its purification as per the instructions of Supreme Lord Vishnu.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja, who is an incarnation of Adisesha, is known as "Pavitrikrta-bhubhagah – One who purified the places, wherever he visited, by his holy presence."

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Holy Name 77: Kurmanatha-prakasakah

Mantra: Om Kurmanatha-prakasakaya Namah

Meaning – One who reveals the form of Lord Kurma at Sri Kurmam

Pastime – When Sri Ramanuja visits Jagannatha Puri and wishes to change the method of worship to Pancharatra, the priests of Jagannatha appeal to the Lord and request his intervention. Lord Jagannatha to balance the situation, overnight Sri Ramanujacharya was moved by him from Jagannath Puri to Sri Kurmam. When Sri Ramanujacharya woke up, he saw the temple of Sri Kurmam and by seeing the temple tower, he paid his obeisances and approached the temple from the west side and offering his prayers as he walked towards it. The deity of the temple, Lord Kurmanatha (Lord Vishnu in the form of a transcendental tortoise), who was originally facing east, to respond to the prayers of Sri Ramanujacharya, who is his dear devotee, Lord turned to the west! Out of his great love towards Sri Ramanujacharya. To commemorate this, the temple has two Dhwaja Sthambhas, one on the east side and another on the west side.

When Sri Ramanujacharya visited the temple of Lord Kurma, the Lord turned in the direction of Sri Ramanucharya out of Love. But, when Sri Ramanujacharya visits the shrine, he understands that the people are worshipping the deity as a Linga (Lord Shiva) because the body of Lord Kurma resembles Linga. This is due to the influence of Advaitis, the followers of Adi Shankaracharya. Sri Ramanujacharya understands the entire situation and proves by scriptural evidence that the presiding deity of the temple is Lord Kurmanatha (Lord Vishnu in the form of a transcendental tortoise), which is the second incarnation of Lord Vishnu. And also, this was further solidified, when the deity of Lord Kurma turned when Sri Ramanucharya came there. Then the temple in charge, other authorities, and the local King accepted the verdict of Sri Ramanujacharya and started to follow the worship the Lord Kurma according to the instructions of Sri Ramanujacharya. To commemorate this, they installed the second Dhwaja Sthambha, on the west side of the temple. Later on, the temple prospered during the regime of Sri Narahari Tirtha, the disciple of Srila Madhvacharya.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Kurmanatha-prakasakah – One who reveals the form of Lord Kurma at Sri Kurmam.”

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Holy Name 78: Sri-venkatacala-dhisa-sankha-cakra-pradayakah

Mantra: Om Sri-venkatacala-dhisa-sankha-cakra-pradayakaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the provider of Sankha (Conch) and Chakra (Discus) to the master of Venkatachala, Lord Srinivasa

Pastime – Once King Thondaman who was ruling the region of Tamil Nadu including Tirumala under its jurisdiction was frequently tormented by demons called Simhada, the King was annoyed and prayed to the Lord Srinivasa fervently to save the people from their sufferings! Lord Srinivasa appeared before the King and lent his Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus) and ordained the King to vanquish the enemy with them, the King did as he was told and after the victory, He kept the Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus) in his palace and worshipped them as the representation and mercy of Lord Srinivasa, or some say, King returned the Sankha and Chakra to Lord Srinivasa, but requested Lord to hold them invisible to the eyes of the mortals.

So, then onwards Lord Srinivasa in the Tirumala temple was without his Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus). During subsequent generations there were differences of opinion as to the deity was Lord Shiva and not Lord Vishnu. It gradually came to the fore and the followers of Lord Shiva felt that the temple and deity were not Lord Vishnu but Lord Shiva, some said the deity was the demigod Subramanya, and some said the deity was Durga. During that period Sri Ramanuja, who was at Tirumala, debated with all the opponents and proved that the predominating deity of Tirumala was none other than Lord Vishnu. Even after proving still, few people raised an issue, if the deity is Lord Vishnu, why he is not

holding Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus)? Sri Ramanuja thought and wished to end the conflict once for all, so he suggested that the insignias of Lord Vishnu, the Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus) as well as of Lord Shiva, the Trident, and Deer, Subramanya's and Durga's to be kept inside the sanctum and the doors closed at night, and anything that is accepted by the deity and adorned in the morning by Himself will be the final proof of identity! To this, everyone agreed and the procedure was followed with all precautions. The next morning when the doors were opened, everyone observed that the deity was adorned with Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus). In this way, Sri Ramanuja established the supremacy of Lord Vishnu (Srinivasa) in Tirumala.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sri-venkatacala-dhisa-sankha-cakra-pradayakah – One who is the provider of Sankha (Conch) and Chakra (Discus) to the master of Venkatachala, Lord Srinivasa."

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Holy Name 79: Sri-venkatesa-svasurah

Mantra: Om Sri-venkatesa-svasuraya Namah

Meaning – One who is the father-in-law (Uncle) of Lord Venkateshwara (Srinivasa), the predominating deity of Tirumala

Pastime – On the divine order of Sri Ramanuja, who is none other than Sri Adisesha, Sri Ananthalvan, who is also an incarnation of Sri Adisesha, moves to Tirumala hills and engages in the service of Lord Srinivasa, by forming a flower garden. Once it was Vasanta Rutu on the Thirumala Hills. The Garden laid by Ananthalvan had become beautiful with different kinds of flowers and fruits and presented a colourful look. One morning Ananthalvan was aghast. The garden had been defiled. The flower plants were uprooted. The fruits were plucked and strewn hither and thither. The garden was in a chaotic state and presented an ugly look. Nobody could tell him how it had happened. The watchmen were helpless. The next night Ananthalvan was waiting with his disciples keeping a watch for intruders. That was the ninth night of Vasanta Ruutu. Ananthalvan was hiding underneath a bush. In the dead of night, he saw a princely couple with beautiful ornaments roaming in the garden. For a moment he was overjoyed. But he was also overtaken by wrath and chased the couple. He dragged both of them to tie them up under a tree. The charming prince escaped from Ananthalvan's clutches. The princess, however, could not escape as she was fascinated by Ananthalvan's Bhakti. Ananthalvan tied her underneath a Champaka tree and enquired about her antecedents" Why did you and your husband defile the beautiful garden? What is his name? Who is he? The lady answered, "I am like your daughter. I did no wrong. I and my husband are the rulers of these Hills. My Lord wanders all over the Hills as he pleases. He has defiled your garden. I am not responsible for what has happened. Please spare me. You know the Shastras. How can I mention the name of my Lord? He is the culprit and not me. You cannot torment me like this. Please leave me free. Ananthalvan told her that she

was trying to be clever and he wanted her to show him the chief thief who was her husband. She pleaded her inability to do so and wanted to be released. Ananthalvan told her," It was after a long vigil I caught you. You look like Mahalakshmi. Verily, you are like a daughter to me. Your husband is sure to come searching for you. Let him come in the morning. I will take a ransom from him and then release you. Till then, you will have to be under the Champaka," Ananthalvan was holding vigil the whole night.

The next morning the Archakas opened the temple gate and went into the sanctum sanctorum for the morning rituals. They were amazed to note that the golden locket covering Alarmelmanga on the chest of the Lord was missing. The officials of the temple grew suspicious of the Archakas and started punishing them. At this point, the Lord's voice was heard by one of the Archakas pointing out that none of them was guilty of theft and that when the Lord and Alarmelmanga were playing in the Sri Ramanuja garden of Ananthalvan, they were caught by Ananthalvan. The Lord escaped, but Alarmelmanga could not. She was under the Champaka tree under the watchful eye of Ananthalvan. The Lord commanded the officers of the temple to go to the garden and get Alarmelmanga released and bring Ananthalvan to the temple. Promptly, the officers and the Archakas went to the grove with the temple honours and were bewildered to see Alarmelmanga who was in the disguise of princess and Ananthalvan under the Champaka tree. In the Dvaparayuga, the Lord was tied to the mortar by Yasoda. In the same way, in this Kaliyuga, Alarmelmanga was tied down to the Champaka tree by Ananthalvan. They conveyed to him the Lord's Command. Ananthalvan was feeling crest-fallen that he had done offence. He released Alarmelmanga and prostrated before her praying for forgiveness. Alarmelmanga told Ananthalvan that he should consider her as his daughter. Immediately, she transformed herself into a Kanya (young lady). Ananthalvan finishing his morning oblations took the daughter with flowers and garlands in procession to the temple. He bowed before the Lord praying for mercy.

The young lady immediately transformed herself and adorned the chest of Lord Srinivasa. This was the origin of the tradition considering. Alarmelmanga is the daughter of Ananthalvan and the Lord of the Seven Hills is Ananthalvan's son-in-law. In the Tamil month of Purattasi, during the Rathotsavam, on the 8th day of Brahmotsava, it is customary even today to adorn the Lord with Pitamabara and silken cloth as Sambhavana of Ananthalvan, the father-in-law. This is a benediction to Ananthalvan.

Further, Sri Ramanuja, who is an incarnation of Sri Adisesha, visited Tirumala hills and worshipped Lord Srinivasa. During his time, Tirumala hills were very remote and people rarely visited or stayed. The financial situation of the temple is also very normal, understanding all these, Sri Ramanuja decided to install or pratishta of Vyuha Lakshmi (two-handed Sridevi) on the Lord's necklace (kantika) along with already existing Sridevi in the chest of Lord Srinivasa. So, for the limitless wealth of Lord Srinivasa to prosper, as said in the sastras, Sri Ramanuja offered and did the ritual installation (pratishta) of a gold two-handed Lakshmi,

on the necklace of the Lord. Then onwards, on the chest of Lord Srinivasa was adored with two Lakshmis, till then, only one Lakshmi was adored. Because Sri Ramanuja conducted a marriage between Lakshmi and Srinivasa in the form of installing the Vyuha Lakshmi deity on the chest of the Lord Srinivasa, Sri Ramanuja became a father-in-law for Lord Srinivasa. Similar to the instant of Sri Ananthalvan. In this way, both Sri Ananthalvan and Sri Ramanuja, both the incarnations of Sri Adisesha, became the father-in-law of Lord Srinivasa.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja (also Sri Ananthalvan) is "Sri-venkatesa-svasurah – One who is the father-in-law (Uncle) of Lord Venkateshwara (Srinivasa), the predominating deity of Tirumala."

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Holy Name 80: Sri-rama-saka-khadesikah

Mantra: Om Sri-rama-saka-khadesikaya namah

Meaning – One who is the spiritual master of Lord Srinivasa, who is the husband of Goddess Lakshmi

Pastime – Sri Adisesha, who is the serpent bed of Lord Narayana, appeared in this world as several incarnations for rendering services to the Supreme Lord. That Adisesha appeared as Sri Ramanuja for the propagation of Vaishnavism and the same Adisesha appeared as Ananthalvan for rendering services to Lord Srinivasa at the hills of Thirumala. By the divine arrangement Sri Ramanuja, who is none other than Adisesha, sent Ananthalvan, who is also none other than the incarnation of Adisesha, to Thirumala Hills for the service of Lord Srinivasa and he also continued to render services to Lordship with heart and soul.

During Sri Ramanuja's time some controversies were created around the deity of Lord Srinivasa to Lord Shiva or some other demigod etc… to clear the Controversies Sri Ramanuja requested the Lord to hold Shanka and Chakra and Lord, who is Bhakta Vatsala promptly followed the words of his devotee and holds Shanka and Chakra, that's why the entire body of Lord Srinivasa is stone and Shanka and Chakra is gold. Ananthalvan was an eyewitness to the work of Sri Ramanuja in this regard. His book Sri Venkatesa Ithihasamala is one more example of his deep devotion to the Lord. Further, regarding this incident, Vaishnavas comment that "The Initiation ceremony in the Vaishnava tradition is that, the Acharya will imprint the marks of Shanka and Chakra on the shoulders of the disciple, which makes him the disciple. In this case, Sri Ramanuja gives the Shanka and Chakra, which adored the shoulders of Lord Srinivasa, so Lord Srinivasa became the disciple of Sri Ramanuja, who is none other than Adisesha."

To strengthen this understanding, there is an incident. On one occasion, several Vaishnavas were ascending the Thirumala Hills, coming from Sri Rangam to worship Lord Srinivasa. When they were feeling tired, a young Brahmachari

came to them and served the temple prasadam. The Vaishnavas were trying to find out who he was before they received the prasadam. The young lad replied that he was a Vaishnava and was known as Madhurakavidasa and a disciple of Ananthalvan. It was Ananthalvan who had sent him to feed them with the Prasadam having come to know of their plight through the pilgrims the prasadam was straight from the temple sent by Ananthalvan and they could have freely enjoyed the same. Still not satisfied, the Vaishnavas asked the young lad to recite the Taniyan of his Acharya. The young Brahmachari recited,

akhilatmagunavasam ajnanatimirpaham
asritanam susaranam vande anantharyadesikam

Meaning: I bow to Acharya Ananthalvan, who is the repository of knowledge, Acharya, mercy, and wisdom, the one who removes ignorance and is eminently suited for surrender by disciples.

The Vaishnavas then questioned the youngster how his Taniyan did not refer to Ananthalvan's connection to Sri Ramanuja, was the young lad trying to fool them by reciting a sloka composed then and there? The Brahmachari replied that there were two. Taniyans in praise of Ananthalvan, one referring to the glory of his character and another referring to his connection with Sri Ramanuja. The second verse was,

srimath ramanujacharya sripadamboruhadvayam
sathutha manga sandaryam anantharyamaham bhaje

Meaning: I prostrate before Ananthalvan who is equal to the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja and who is worshipped by Vaishnavas all the world over.

The Vaishnavas were convinced that the youngster was a true disciple of Ananthalvan and received the prasadam from him. The young lad took leave of them and returned to the Hills. Slowly, the Vaishnavas ascended the Hills and were received by Ananthalvan at the entrance. They told him that they were grateful to Ananthalvan for having sent prasadam through one of his bright young disciples. Ananthalvan was bewildered. He had not sent any prasadam, nor had he engaged any young disciple for this task. He was totally in the dark. Lord Srinivasa had helped them and their hour of trouble. That was all His pastimes. The young Brahmachari was Lord Srinivasa Himself. He wanted to know more about him. The Vaishnavas explained how they doubted the credibility of the youngster and put him to the test. They told him that he had declared himself as his disciple, as Madhurakavidasa and had recited two slokas in his praise and he had left them a little earlier and he should be in the temple precincts. They recited the two verses before Ananthalvan. The entire assembly was wonderstruck. They realized that the Lord had declared himself as Ananthalvan's disciple and chosen the name Madhurakavidasa. Even though there were so many others. Acharyas and Simhasanadhipathis, the second verse showed that it was Ananthalvan who could be fittingly considered equal to the

Lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja. From then on, the Padhuka (Sathari) at the shrine of Ramanuja up the Hills came to be known as Ananthalvan since then the two verses became famous as the Taniyans in praise of Ananthalvan.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja or Sri Ananthalvan (Both are incarnations of Sri Adisesha) is "Sri-rama-saka-khadesikah – One who is the spiritual master of Lord Srinivasa, who is the husband of Goddess Lakshmi."

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Holy Name 81: Krpamatra-prasannaryah

Mantra: Om Krpamatra-prasannaryaya namah

Meaning – One who provides instruction to disciples solely on the basis of his Nirhetuka-kripa (causeless mercy) and He is the foremost among the all-merciful Acharyas in the Srivaishnava Parampara

Pastime – Once there was a severe drought in Melnadu near the Coimbatore region of Tamilnadu that continued for almost 12 years. An old couple Kongil Piratti and her husband Kattalai Vari, living there decided to leave their home and reside near the Sri Rangam. They managed their daily lives living near the temple and One day they observed a huge number of Vaishnavas following Sri Ramanuja to the banks of River Kaveri. Curious to know about the following, they followed Sri Ramanuja and found the entire place were his followers. The elderly lady was charmed by the divine effulgence of Sri Ramanuja. She walked near the banks and asked the villagers, Who the revered Swami was and those followers. The group replied that Sri Ramanuja was the king of ascetics and he moved along with 700 ascetics, innumerable disciples. Several kings are his disciples. You are blessed to have his darshan remarked an old man. She liked the place and the vibrations. She used to observe Sri Ramanuja completing his temple duties and entering seven houses daily for alms. She tried her best to have an audience with the great seer but was unsuccessful.

One day to Kongil Piratti's surprise and wait, she saw Sri Ramanuja entering her house. She offered her obeisances and with all humility spoke to him. Oh, Revered Swami, please listen to My prayer, you are a sanyasi who had given up everything in life and there is no possibility of having wealth, gold, jewels, mansions or any otherworldly prosperity. You just have a saffron cloth, a Tridanda, and Bhikshu. When that is the case how was it that so many people are following you all the time? and landlords, kings fall at your lotus feet, whereas you are living on daily Biksha only. what is that you can give to so many followers who are with you? What is the secret behind all these disciples I don't find any difference between a King and you, you are truly Yathi Raja, the king of all sannyasi.

Sri Ramanuja with abundant compassion and humbleness told the old lady, Mother! I don't have any wealth to share but I give them bits of information

about Lordships and have a mantra that will cut the bonds of this material world, which is full of worldly cares and that as a result of this, they would get the grace of the Lord Narayana, which would confer eternal bliss in the form of their attaining to the presence of Lord Vaikuntanatha in Spiritual World.

The lady was quick to request Sri Ramanuja for the mantra for her upliftment as she was in a pitiable condition. She fell at Sri Ramanuja's feet and shed copious tears, in great distress crying all the while that Sri Ramanuja must grace her. Sri Ramanuja looking at her eagerness and devotion informed the disciples to help her in her endeavor. They guided her to the ashram for the initiation ceremony and succeeded in becoming Sri Ramanuja's disciple. With great mercy, he asked her to repeat the Guruparampara verses and later initiated her with the sacred Ashtakshari mantra.

Sri Ramanuja performed Panchasanksaram, and did Mantra Upadesam and the lady got an Initiation Name as "Kongil Periya Piraattiyaar". The old lady was overjoyed and offered her obeisances to the revered saint with all humility.

After taking initiation from Sri Ramanuja, she leads a normal life and devotion to Sri Ramanuja, she developed a great in her heart. After a few months, the situation in Melnadu, the native of Kogil Piratti was better and the old couple decided it was time to leave Sri Rangam. Kongil Piratti went to Sri Ramanuja's mutt and seeking his blessings informed about her leaving Sri Rangam. She longed to have something special to remember her Acharya forever and hence pleaded with Sri Ramanuja to bless her with his Padukas (Slippers). Sri Ramanuja gave his pair of divine Slippers (Padukas) at the request of his disciple. Before leaving she asked Sri Ramanuja to instruct her again on the divine mantra, which he had given to her during the time of her initiation. Amidst her household duties, she forgot that mantra, but Sri Ramanuja without getting angry about her behavior with complete compassion instructed her with the initiation mantra. With much relief and joy, she returned to her native place.

Several years later, due to the disturbance of the Chola king, Sri Ramanuja had to leave Sri Rangam and move to Thirunarayanapuram (Melukote). On the way, he went through the town where Kongu Piratti was living. She proved to Sri Ramanuja and his disciples that she had a connection to Sri Ramanuja's divine feet by showing them his divine padukas and how she got them; then she hosted them at her place and made them happy.

In Sri-Vaishnava Sampradaya, it is known that acharyas before Sri Ramanuja connected with him (Emperuman) by touching their lotus feet to the head of the Acharya Sri Ramanuja and those after him having a connection with him by touching their head to Acharya Sri Ramanuja's lotus feet. In the Guru-parampara all acharyas before Sri Ramanuja are known as '*Anuvritti prasannacharyas*', which states that those acharyas will give the meanings to their disciples only after checking whether the disciple obtained the required qualification or not and he is really capable or not. Even Sri Ramanuja had to go 18 times from Sri

Rangam to Thirukoshtiyur to get the Mantra Diksha from Sri Thirukoshtiyur Nambi, and he instructed Sri Ramanuja not to let out the meanings to anyone. But Sri Ramanuja due to his causless mercy, stood on top of the Thirukoshtiyur Gopuram and let out the Thirumantram to all who were interested. Sri Ramanuja broke the earlier restrictions for a disciple and gave the meanings to those who were all interested in it. And so all the acharyas who came after Sri Ramanuja are called "*Krupa Mathra Prasannacharyas*". They don't expect the eligibility to give divine meanings, the only eligibility for a disciple to get the meanings from his acharya. Being the pioneer of all the "*Krupa Mathra Prasannacharyas",* Sri Ramanuja is known as "Krpamatra-prasannaryah – One who provides instruction to disciples solely on the basis of his Nirhetuka-kripa (causeless mercy) and He is the foremost among the all-merciful Acharyas in the Srivaishnava Parampara," in this case also, Sri Ramanuja bestowed mercy on Kongil Piratti purely on the basis of causeless mercy.

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Holy Name 82: Gopika-moksadayakah

Mantra: Om Gopika-moksadayakaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the grantor of liberation for Cowherd Lady, Tudiyur Kombai

Pastime – Tudiyur Kombai, is an ordinary dairy products seller on the hill of Thirumala. Her entire life she served the devotees in the hill of Thirumala and supplied the dairy products for Lord Srinivasa's service. She used to hear from the Vaishnavas in Thirumala about the liberation and struggle in this material world. In this way, once she asked Lord Srinivasa for liberation. But, Lord Srinivasa told her to approach and get a recommendation letter from Sri Ramanuja, and then she was waiting for the opportunity to meet and get the recommendation.

Once during the visit of Sri Ramanuja to Thirumala, Sri Ramanuja desired to conduct a festivity for Lord Srinivasa. It is said that for festivity, a greater quantity of dairy products like Milk, Curd, Ghee, etc… needed. As a disciple of Sri Ramanuja started to search for a dairy product vendor. Finally, they were able to meet Tudiyur Kombai. She told them that, she could supply as much quantity of dairy products as Sri Ramanuja needed but the intern needed to meet Sri Ramanuja instead of money. But, as a strict Sanyasa Ashram of Sri Ramanuja, his disciples were not very interested in agreeing with this deal, but without any other option left they finally agreed after getting duo approval from Sri Ramanuja. The entire festivity went on very nicely and the immense quantity of dairy products was supplied by Tudiyur Kombai.

After the event, the disciples of Sri Ramanuja tried to pay something to Tudiyur Kombai instead of the agreed deal, but Tudiyur Kombai firmly did not agree to

that, and on proper time they brought her to the place of Sri Ramanuja in an assembly of devotees.

Sri Ramanuja's disciple Mudaliandan asked her how she wanted to be paid. She replied that she wanted liberation, and all the people in the assembly were shocked by the desire of the milk merchants. Sri Ramanuja told her to take initiation and continue her service to Lord Srinivasa and one day she would get liberation. But, she wants confirmation with Sri Ramanuja's signature! She explained the reason for her strange request. She had approached Lord Srinivasa for liberation and He had told her that if she had Ramanuja's signature, then she would automatically enter Sri Vaikuntha. This shows the high position the Lord had accorded to Ramanuja.

Tudiyur Kombai finally got the written words and signature of Sri Ramanuja in her hand, the moment she got that immediately she ran towards the temple of Lord Srinivasa and quickly rushed towards the main shrine and keeping her strong faith in the words of her Acharya Sri Ramanuja, she went in front Lord Srinivasa and submitted the recommendation letter for liberation from Sri Ramanuja. Immediately Lord Srinivasa granted her liberation and on the spot, she entered the deity and went Back to Godhead, the Vaikunta Loka. Some people abject this and say that she stayed in Thirumala until her last breath and then she went back to Godhead, Vaikunta Loka. In both cases the humble Tudiyur Kombai, without any knowledge of Vedas, Puranas, etc… liberation from this world just by the mercy of Acharya.

Seeing all these things happening in front of their eyes, all the disciples of Sri Ramanuja approached him and enquired about the incident. Sri Ramanuja told them that Tudiyur Kombai's eagerness and faith in the words of Acharya should be noted and top of all her intense desire to get liberation is a great lesson to learn. Then all the disciples of Sri Ramanuja understood the position of Sri Ramanuja.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Gopika-moksadayakah – One who is the grantor of liberation for Cowherd Lady, Tudiyur Kombai."

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Holy Name 83: Samicinarya-sacchisya-satkrtah

Mantra: Om Samicinarya-sacchisya-satkrtaya Namah

Meaning – One who is served by his great disciple, Thirumalai Sri Nallan Chakravarthi, and also the disciples or followers of Thirumalai Sri Nallan Chakravarthi

Pastime – Urrupattur Achan Pillai (823 A.D – 924 A.D) also known as Sri Varadhacharya was born in Srivatsa Gotram, and he was a disciple of Sri Natha

Muni. His grandson, who is also known as Sri Varadacharya is a disciple and close relative of Sri Ramanuja.

One day when Sri Varadacharya went with his wife to the River Vegavati in Kanchipuram to take a bath, he came across a body floating in the river with Vaishnava insignias on it. Sri Varadacharya observed this and felt that the mortal remains must be properly consigned to flames which is a must for a Vaishnava godbrother. He immediately retrieved the body and duly consigned it to flames reciting the Veda mantras! Soon the scholars and the orthodox religious heads in the town got the message and took exception to this act of Sri Varadacharya.

On the 13th day, he was to perform a ceremony for the Vaishnava, for whom he conducted the final rites and for which he duly approached the Brahmin priests in the town to come to his house and conduct the same and also to honour Prasadam. To his dismay, they refused to do it. He was heartbroken and prayed to Lord Sri Ranaganatha, the presiding deity of Srirangam, Lord Sri Varadaraja the presiding deity of Kanchipuram, and Lord Sri Venkatesa the presiding deity of Tirumala, soon all three deities of the Lord appeared before him in the disguise of Brahmanas and agreed to conduct the stalled ceremony and honour Prasadam, accordingly completed the same. He was overwhelmed with devotion and could not even express his gratitude to them formally! The news reached the scholars, who were taken aback thinking that some common Brahmanas visited his house and refused to budge from their position. And started to further criticize Sri Varadacharya. This news was again told by Thirukachi Nambi to Lord Varadaraja, during his Ekaantha Seva, Lord Sri Varadaraja was not able to tolerate the insult to his dear devotee and also told to Thirukachi Nambi that, “Oorukkellam Pollan Emakku Nallan.” The next day, Lord Varadaraja refuses to accept any services from the priests. The priests got confused and they prayed to Lord Varadaraja for the reason, suddenly the priests at the Varadaraja temple heard the voice from the sanctum sanctorum which went as follows. “Oorukkellam Pollan Emakku Nallan” means that he may be an antagonist to you people, but he is very dear to Me! And same is confirmed by Thirukachi Nambi to all the priests. Then onwards by the grace of Lord Varadraja, Sri Varadacharya came to be known as Sri Nallan Varadacharya.

Once King Thondaman who was ruling the region of Tamil Nadu including Tirumala under its jurisdiction was frequently tormented by demons called Simhada, the King was annoyed and prayed to the Lord Srinivasa fervently to save the people from suffering! The Lord Srinivasa appeared before the King and lent his Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus) and ordained the King to vanquish the enemy with them, the King did as he was told and after the victory, He kept the Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus) in his palace and worshipped them as the representation and mercy of Lord Srinivasa. Then onwards Lord Srinivasa in the Tirumala temple was without his Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus). During subsequent generations there were differences of opinion as to the deity was Lord Shiva and not Lord Vishnu. It gradually came to the fore and the followers of Lord Shiva felt that the temple and deity were not Lord Vishnu but Lord Shiva.

During that period Sri Ramanuja, who was at Tirumala suggested that the insignias of Lord Vishnu, the Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus) as well as of Lord Shiva, the Trident, and Deer be kept inside the sanctum and the doors closed at night, and anything that is accepted by Lord Vishnu and adorned in the morning by Himself will be the final proof of identity! To this, everyone agreed and the procedure was followed with all precautions. The next morning when the doors were opened, everyone observed that the deity was adorned with Sankha (conch) and Chakra (discus). Though all agreed that the deity was Lord Vishnu, there was a dispute once again on the issue.

During this period there was a powerful King a worshipper of Lord Shiva was ruling the Kalahasti region and King Yadavasa was ruling the Tirumala region. The worshippers of Lord Shiva approached the King of Kalahasti to come to their rescue and restore the status of Tirumala as Lord Shiva's temple. To this the King of Kalahasti readily agreed and came with his army to Tirumala and accosted King Yadavasa, since he was not as powerful as the King of Kalahasti, he pleaded inability to protect the temple. At that time Sri Nallan Varadacharya approached the King of Kalahasti and extensively quoted from scriptures as to the antiquity of Tirumala as the abode of Lord Vishnu and vouched that the deity is indeed Lord Vishnu and not Lord Shiva. To this, the King of Kalahasti after deep thinking posed a challenge to all those who support and oppose the views. He ordered a red hot iron horse to be brought and asked each group to assign an able person to mount it and circumambulate the temple! This challenge rattled the followers of Lord Shiva and none of them came forward to accept the challenge. But Sri Nallan Varadacharya readily accepted the challenge and went to Swami Pushkarini (Temple Pond) took a bath and prayed to Lord Srinivasa with Vedic hymns! And mounted that red hot iron horse and started to circumambulate the temple as though it was like a normal horse. All were amazed at this feat including the King of Kalahasti and accepted the verdict that the deity was indeed Lord Vishnu, immediately they heard the voice of the divine through the priest that the title “Chakravarthi”, Chakravarthi means one who is King of the Kings, which is being conferred on Sri Nallan Varadacharya! From that day onwards, he came to be known as Tirumalai Nallan Chakravarthi or Sri Nallan Chakravarthi Varadacharya. In this way, by the mercy of Lord Varadaraja, he received the title “Nallan” and by the mercy of Lord Srinivasa, he received the title “Chakravarthi”. Then onwards the descendants of Sri Nallan Chakravarthi Varadacharya were known as “Nallan Chakravarthis”.

Once, due to Krimikantha Chola’s problem, Sri Ramanuja started walking through the forests along with Govinda, Dasarathi, Danurdasa, and others in small groups to avoid getting spotted by Krimikantha’s spies. They walked day and night without even consuming food or water to ensure that they crossed the boundaries of Krimikantha Chola’s kingdom. After walking for two days, Sri Ramanuja and his disciples crossed the borders of the Chola kingdom. As they were completely exhausted, they drank some water from the brook that was flowing nearby and slept on a hillock in the forest.

Some outcasts and tribals who were living in the forest saw Sri Ramanuja and his disciples sleeping on the hillock. Seeing their condition, the tribals understood that some misfortune might have forced them to flee from their dwellings. The tribals lit a bonfire and gathered some fruits from the nearby forest for the unforeseen guests. Due to exhaustion, Sri Ramanuja and his retinue did not wake up for a very long time. As the tribals and outcasts were treated as untouchables in those days they did not dare to venture near Ramanuja and others who were sleeping in the open on a hillock.

After some time, Sri Ramanuja woke up and the tribals placed the fruits that they had gathered before them and stood with folded hands at a distance. The devotees thought that the tribals were god-sent, but because they were strict followers of principles, they were reluctant to accept the offerings from tribals. Understanding the minds of the devotees, the tribals told them that, they were the followers of Sri Nallan Chakravarthi Varadacharya and when Sri Ramanuja heard the name of Sri Nallan Chakravarthi Varadacharya, immediately he smiled and commented that, could (Spiritual Master) like Nallan poured his rain (mercy) in this mid forest for the tribals. This indicates that the causeless mercy of Sri Ramanuja was perfectly carried out by Sri Nallan Chakravarthi Varadacharya by allowing all the living entities to take up the devotional service of Lord Vishnu. After this, the devotees relished some fruits after taking their baths and finishing their ablutions. In this way, Sri Ramanuja, who started from Sri Rangam, the abode of Lord Ranganatha, was pleased by the service of Sri Nallan Chakravarthi Varadacharya and his followers. After this, when Sri Ramanuja was winding up his earthly pastimes, he appointed Sri Nallan Chakravarthi Varadacharya (Tirumalai Nallan) as one of his successors among 74 successors.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Samicinarya-sacchisya-satkrtah – One who is served by his great disciple, Thirumalai Sri Nallan Chakravarthi, and also the disciples or followers of Thirumalai Sri Nallan Chakravarthi.”

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Holy Name 84: Vaisnava-priyah

Mantra: Om Vaisnava-priyaya Namah

Meaning – One who is very affectionate to Vaishnavas, the devotees of Lord Vishnu

Pastime – By the mercy of Sri Ramanuja, a person named Danurdasa, who was immersed in heinous acts, his heart got transformed and he became an adherent devotee of Lord Ranganatha. Sri Ramanuja gave initiation to him with the name, Pillaiurangavilli Dasa.

Though Pillaiurangavilli Dasa (Danurdasa) was a Sudra by birth he had evolved into a very good devotee by the mercy of Ramanuja and even the senior-most

disciples of Ramanuja started to admire his humility as it is one of the most important qualities that a Vaishnava should possess. Ramanuja started liking Danurdasa and used to appreciate his sincerity frequently and Danurdasa started accompanying Ramanuja wherever he went. Ramanuja used to put his arm around a Brahmin disciple, Dasarathi (Sri Mudaliandan) while going to bathe in Cauvery every day and used to put his arm around Danurdasa, who was a Sudra by birth when going to the temple to have darshan of Lord Ranganatha after finishing his bath. As Sudras were considered to be the lowest among all castes, they were considered impure and treated as untouchables. Therefore, many people started to question Ramanuja's attitude of going to have the darshan of the Lord with his arms around an untouchable's shoulders. Many Brahmin disciples, who were proud of their lineage, became envious of Danurdasa for all the appreciation that he was receiving. They thought that Ramanuja was discriminating against them due to his excessive attachment to Danurdasa. Though they wanted to directly ask Ramanuja the reason for his discriminatory attitude they did not dare to do so. Instead, they raised the issue with one of the senior disciples of Ramanuja and the senior disciple asked Ramanuja about the reason for his discriminatory attitude.

Ramanuja said, "When one goes to take a bath one should also try to shed the dirt that mires his mind along with cleansing his body. While going to bathe I put my arm around the shoulder of one of the Brahmin disciples, Sri Mudaliandan, as they are very proud of their birth to remind me that I should overcome the pride of learning and of taking birth in an aristocratic Brahmin family. One should approach the Supreme Lord with a lot of humility. Therefore, I put my arm around the shoulders of Danurdasa, who is very humble despite being a Sudra by birth, thinking that I might become as humble as he is."

Everyone who raised the issue became ashamed of themselves for having misunderstood their guru and silently dispersed from there.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Vaishnava-priyah – One who is very affectionate to Vaishnavas, the devotees of Lord Vishnu," irrespective of colour, caste, creed, etc… Sri Ramanuja propagated Vaishnavaism and showed his mercy and affection equally to everyone.

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Holy Name 85: Krmi-kanta-nrpa-dhvamsi

Mantra: Om Krmi-kanta-nrpa-dhvamsine Namah

Meaning – One who is the destroyer of Chola King Krmikanta

Pastime – A bigoted Shaivite King called Krimikantha Chola, whom historians deduce to be one of the three Kulathunga Cholas in the Chola dynasty, ruled Kanchipuram and its surrounding areas including Sri Rangam. He was very devoted to Lord Shiva. He was so bigoted that he wanted to convert everyone in

his kingdom to Shaivism and did everything possible to do so. As his efforts to force people to embrace his belief met with limited success he asked his ministers to suggest easier means to further his goal. Nalluran, one of the ministers in Krimikantha Chola's court, stood up and said, "O King, Ramanujacharya is the foremost leader of the Vaishnavas and his popularity and influence transcends the boundaries of our kingdom. The Vaishnavas and the people of the other sects consider him to be the authority on Vedas. Therefore, if we succeed in converting Ramanujacharya to Shaivism, most of the people in the country will be inspired to embrace Shaivism. Everyone will start worshipping Shiva as the supreme personality of godhead instead of worshipping Lord Vishnu."

Krimikantha was so obsessed with his idea of forcibly converting everyone to Shaivism that he deputed some soldiers to Sri-Rangam to bring Ramanuja to his court without even thinking about the consequences of following Nalluran's advice. The soldiers reached Sri-Rangam and headed straight to Ramanuja's monastery and asked for Ramanuja. Ramanuja was taking a bath in one of the secluded places of the monastery. Seeing the soldiers' attitude, Kuresha sensed some danger to Ramanuja's life and mission. Kuresha immediately donned Ramanuja's saffron robes presented himself before the soldiers and said, "I am Ramanuja, what brings you here?"

The soldiers told Kuresha, who was impersonating Ramanuja, that the king had asked them to bring him to the court and Kuresha readily agreed to accompany them. Mahapurna, who was coming to the ashram, saw Kuresha going along with the soldiers and accompanied him sensing some danger. The devotees at the ashram informed Ramanuja about everything that happened while he was taking a bath and performing his ablutions. Ramanuja became concerned about Kuresha and Mahapurna's life. Sensing the intentions of the bigoted king, the devotees in the ashram requested Ramanuja to flee from Sri-Rangam. Ramanuja and some of his ardent disciples left Sri-Rangam and started to flee towards the Mysore region through the forests to avoid getting caught by the king's soldiers if they came in search of him after realizing that they were tricked by Kuresha who was impersonating Ramanuja.

The king's soldiers took Mahapurna and Kuresha to the court and produced them before the king. As Nalluran was familiar with Ramanuja and some of his senior disciples he recognized Kuresha and informed the king that Ramanuja had escaped by tricking them and it was Kuresha who had come to the court in Ramanuja's robes. The king became very furious and asked his soldiers to search for Ramanuja. The king said, "You are Ramanuja's guru and he is Ramanuja's senior disciple. Now that Ramanuja has escaped, you accept Shiva as the supreme personality of the godhead and worship him."

Kuresha, who was seething with anger said, "How can one who has emerged from the forehead of Lord Brahma, who was created by Supreme Lord Narayana, become greater than Narayana? The scriptures clearly state that everything

including Lord Brahma, the creator, and Lord Shiva emanated from Narayana and He is the source of everything. They also say that even Lord Shiva worships Lord Narayana as the supreme personality of godhead. Under such circumstances how can I accept Lord Shiva as the supreme personality of the godhead?"

The king asked his court scholars to refute Kuresha's arguments in a big debate to determine the supreme personality of godhead.

Krimikantha Chola's court was filled with many reputed Shaiva scholars. Therefore, all of them tried to impress the king by trying to establish Lord Shiva as the Supreme Personality of Godhead by refuting Kuresha. Despite being alone, Kuresha refuted every scholar who tried to test his knowledge and established Lord Narayana as the Supreme Personality of Godhead following the scriptures. As all his efforts to convince Kuresha to embrace Shaivism failed, Krimikantha said, "I am not bothered about what the scriptures say and need not argue with you to establish Lord Shiva as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I believe Lord Shiva to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, you have to accept and worship Lord Shiva as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Take this document and sign in it to declare that you have accepted our faith."

The king handed over a document that read "Shivasya param nasthi", which means no one is greater than Lord Shiva. Kuresha took the document and wrote "Drona Shivasya param asthi", which means Drona is bigger than Shiva and returned the document to the King. A smaller measure of weight was called Shiva and a measure that was slightly bigger than Shiva was called Drona in those days. Therefore, Kuresha had written Drona is bigger than Shiva in the document. Krimikantha became enraged as soon as he read Kuresha's comment. In a fit of rage, Krimikantha asked his soldiers to gouge out Kuresha's and Mahapurna's eyes with heated iron rods. As soon as the soldiers brought the heated iron rods, Kuresha snatched the iron rods from them and said, "I do not want to see anything with these eyes after seeing a sinner like you, who despises the Supreme Lord Narayana and my guru Ramanuja, being blinded by power."

Being dejected at the turn of events, Kuresha gouged out his eyes on his own by piercing the iron rods into his eyes and threw the same on the Chola King, the eyes fell on the King's neck and fell down. Meanwhile, the king's men gouged out the eyes of Mahapurna and threw both Kuresha and Mahapurna out of the fort. Kuresha bowed before his tormentors and said, "You are my true friends. By taking out my eyesight you have reduced my burden of repeatedly trying to control my mind which used to frequently wander towards sense objects that my eyes used to see."

As Mahapurna was very old, he was unable to bear the pain and was finding it difficult to walk. Being guided by his strong intuition, Kuresha held Mahapurna's hand and started to lead him towards Sri-Rangam. Mahapurna's daughter, Attulai, came there along with a few devoted Vaishnavas after coming to know

about her father's plight. As Mahapurna was unable to walk further he slept with his head on Kuresha's lap and left his mortal coils while contemplating his guru, Yamunacharya, on the outskirts of Kanchipuram. Kuresha returned to Sri Rangam after completing the final rites related to Mahapurna's funeral. Despite being great devotees, Mahapurna and Kuresha had to face a lot of hardship and they easily overcame it by focusing their minds on the Supreme Lord and their guru. Their devotion increased manifold due to these hardships.

Due to Krimikantha Chola's problem, Sri Ramanuja started walking through the forests along with Govinda, Dasarathi, Danurdasa, and others in small groups to avoid getting spotted by Krimikantha's spies. They walked day and night without even consuming food or water to ensure that they crossed the boundaries of Krimikantha Chola's kingdom. After walking for two days, Sri Ramanuja and his disciples crossed the borders of the Chola kingdom. Over time, Sri Ramanuja moved to the Melukote region of Karnataka established his base there and started to live there along with his disciples, due to the assistance of King Vishnuvardhana, who became the disciple of Sri Ramanuja, the Vaishnavism spread far and wide.

Meanwhile, due to Krimikantha Chola's influence created great havoc in Sri Rangam, all the services for Lord Ranganatha were stopped and all the devotees were in great trouble. For continues 41 years, the trouble existed. Sri Ramanuja was in Melukote or Thirunarayanapuram. One fine day, the disciples requested Sri Ramanuja to do something to relieve Sri Rangam from the evil hands of Krimikantha Chola, accepting the request of his disciples, Sri Ramanuja offered his prayers to the Supreme Lord. While offering his evening ritual (Sandhya Vandana), it is customary to offer 3 palmfuls of water as an offering to the Lord, which is known as Argya. But, this time, Sri Ramanuja offered 4th time the palmful of water as Argya by praying to the Lordship to rectify the situation in Sri Rangam and put an end to the atrocities of Krimikantha Chola. After this, Krimikantha Chola was affected by "Cancer in the throat" (the throat on which the eyes of Kuratazhwar fell) and soon died, his death was the result of offence at the lotus feet of great devotees of the Supreme Lord and Vaishnavas.

Later, Sri Ramanuja returned to Sri Rangam and re-established the worship of Lord Ranganatha back to its glory. Further, the mess made by Krimikantha Chola in several other holy abodes of Lord Vishnu was rectified and worship started again.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Krmi-kanta-nrpa-dhvamsi – One who is the destroyer of Chola King Krmikanta."

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Holy Name 86: Sarva-mantra-mahodadhah

Mantra: Om Sarva-mantra-mahodadhaye Namah

Meaning – One who is a reservoir of all mantras and their meaning or One who is like an Ocean, which consists of all mantras

Pastime – Once during Arayar Sevai in Sri Rangam temple. Uyntha Pillai Arayar does abinayam for Periya Azhwar Thirumozhi, 2.1 Padhigam (Verse), which describes how Lord Krishna scares his Gopa friends while playing, Uyntha Pillai Arayar shows the expression as Lord Krishna keeping his eyes in a scary position to scare his cowherd friends. But When Govinda Perumal (Embar), watching this from behind immediately corrects the expression of Arayar as if Lord Krishna showing his Conch and Discus (Or his Four-handed Vishnu form) to the children to scare them, the Uyntha Pillai Arayar understands the meaning of the expression shown by Embar and shows the expression in his Arayar Sevai immediately. Sri Ramanuja, on observing this, asks "*govindha perumale irunthiro*" meaning, are there in the assembly Govinda Perumal? – since he knows only Embar (Govinda Perumal) can give such beautiful meanings. This glory belongs to only Sri Ramanuja because Govinda Perumal always humble serves the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja and obtains the higher meanings for the verses of Vedas or Azhwars Pashurams.

Much later, while reciting the last Pasuram (Verse) of Periya Azhwar Thirumozhi, a few Vaishnavas ask the meaning of "*chayai pola padavallar thamum anukkargale*" – Govinda Perumal says he has not heard the meaning from Sri Ramanuja for that particular Pasuram (Verse). But Govinda Perumal keeps the *paduka* of Sri Ramanuja on his head and meditates for a moment and says Sri Ramanuja revealed it at that very moment and says it should be read as "*padvallar – chayai pola – thamum anukkargale*", i.e., one who sings these Pasurams (verses) will be close to Sri Ramanuja like his shadow.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sarva-mantra-mahodadhah – One who is a reservoir of all mantras and their meaning or One who is like an Ocean, which consists of all mantras," either it is Azhwars Pashurams or Vedas or Puranas or transcendental mantras like Dwaya or Narayana Mantra, it's reservoir is only Sri Ramanuja for his descendants.

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Holy Name 87: Angikrta-andhra-purnarya

Mantra: Om Angikrta-andhra-purnaryaya Namah

Meaning – One who graced his disciple, Sri Andhra Purna (Sri Vaduga Nambi)

Pastime – By the supreme will of the Lord, Sri Ramanuja escaped from the trap of the Chola King and reached the place known as Salagrama (Present region in Karnataka). At Salagrama, Sri Ramanuja met a young Brahmin called Andhra Purna, who was very well-versed in the scriptures. As he was a very good devotee, Ramanuja initiated him into the Vaishnava fold following tradition. Andhra Purna (Vaduga Nambi) was so attracted to Ramanuja that he

accompanied Ramanuja and started to serve him. Andhra Purna very soon became very dear to Ramanuja and was named as his attendant. By the order of Thirukosthiyur Nambi, Andhra Purna became the person cook of Sri Ramanuja. Several times, Lord Narayana appeared in the form of Vaduga Nambi (Andhra Purna) to enact the pastime with Sri Ramanuja.

Andhra Purna was very devoted to Ramanujacharya. He used to lovingly take care of everything that Ramanujacharya needed. Everyone in Sri Rangam used to praise him for that. However, Andhra Purna used to proudly accept all the praise that was showered on him instead of feigning humility as a Vaishnava should do. Some devotees thought that Andhra Purna had become proud and arrogant. They complained to Ramanujacharya about Andhra Purna's attitude. Ramanujacharya summoned Andhra Purna and asked him why he was proudly accepting all the praise that was being showered on him instead of rejecting it like a Vaishnava. Purna said, "I did not have any qualifications and I was not even recognized when I was in Salagrama. However, after I became your disciple everyone started praising me. By myself, I do not deserve anything and whatever praise that is showered on me is because of your greatness. Therefore, why should I stop people from praising you?" Everyone in the monastery was amused with the reply given by Andhra Purna and appreciated the mood in which he was accepting the praise that was being showered on him.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Angikrta-andhra-purnarya – One who graced his disciple, Sri Andhra Purna (Sri Vaduga Nambi)."

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Holy Name 88: Salagrama-pratisthitah

Mantra: Om Salagrama-pratisthitaya Namah

Meaning – One who established the Salagrama Kshetra

Pastime – When the Chola King had planned to kill Ramanujacharya, he travelled to Karnataka through the Satyagala forest. The first village that he came across in Karnataka was Saligrama (Salagrama). It is also believed that Nammazhwar had appeared in the dreams of Ramanujacharya directing him to visit Salagrama Kshetra. When Sri Ramanuja visited the Salagrama Kshetra, he was very much attracted to the Deity of Lord Narasimha and named the place Mithilapuri Saligrama. The ancient Deity of Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy was installed by Gautama Rishi around 4800 years back. The Deity of Lord Narasimha was believed to be in the Ugra Swarupa. It was Ramanujacharya who had requested the Lord to assume a peaceful mood. The anger of Lord Narasimha was transferred to His third eye and thus the Lord has three eyes. Because of this, He is also known as Mukkanna Yoga Narasimha Swamy. Muru in Kannada means three. Kannu means eyes. All the villagers requested Ramanujacharya to build the temple for Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy, which he did and established the process of worship for Lord Yoga Narasimha. Sri Ramanujacharya also

installed the Deity of Aravinda Nayaki Thayar next to the Garbha-griha of Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy. Ramanujacharya had stayed there for a few years before proceeding towards Melkote.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Salagrama-pratisthitah – One who established the Salagrama Kshetra.”

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Holy Name 89: Sri-Bhakta-grama-purnesah

Mantra: Om Sri-Bhakta-grama-purnesaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the spiritual master of Sri Purna (Sri Thondanur Nambi)

Pastime – Due to the audacity of King Koluttunga Chola, Sri Ramanuja went out of Sri Rangam and came towards the present-day Karnataka region. On the way, he was rested after crossing the border of Chola King’s influence, there he was served by tribes, after they were fully rested, Sri Ramanuja blessed the tribes and continued with his party on their westward journey. That afternoon they came to another village and were guided to the house of a brahmana named Sri Rangadasa. After accepting the service from Sri Rangadasa and his wife. Along with all the Vaisnavas, Sri Ramanuja continued his journey, and Sri Rangadasa went with them as a guide. By evening they had reached a place known as Vahnipuskarini, where they remained for two days. Then, taking leave of Sri Rangadasa, they continued to the village of Salagrama, where they stayed with a Brahmana named Andhrapurna, who was a very renounced devotee. Having seen his good qualities, Sri Ramanuja initiated Andhrapurna, and later he went on to become his personal servant. From that time on he always remained with his guru, desiring only to serve his lotus feet. This Andhrapurna told Sri Ramanuja about a great devotee named Sri Purna, who lived in the village of Bhakta-grama, not far from Salagrama. Passing through Narasimha-kshetra, they then travelled to Bhaktagrama and remained for some time in the association of Sri Purna. By seeing the divine quality of Sri Ramanuja, he accepted the Vaishnava initiation from him, and then he became a faithful disciple of Sri Ramanuja. He was very prominently known in the Sri Vaishnava community as “Sri Thondanur Nambi”. This Sri Purna became instrumental in introducing Sri Ramanuja to Jain King Vittaladeva, who later surrendered to Sri Ramanuja by embracing Vaishnavism by taking initiation with the name, Vishnuvardahana.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Sri-Bhakta-grama-purnesah – One who is the spiritual master of Sri Purna (Sri Thondanur Nambi).”

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Holy Name 90: Visnu-vardhana-raksakah

Mantra: Om Visnu-vardhana-raksakaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the saviour of King Vishnuvardhana

Pastime – King Vittaladeva was saved and transformed by Sri Ramanuja from Jainism and he received initiation into the Vaishnava clan with the name, Vishnuvaradhana. Even though he was a King, still, he remained a humble servant at the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja and assisted him in the propagation of Vaishnavism.

King Vishnuvardhana's mother lost her eyesight due to old age and the king was worried about that. King Vishnuvardhana met Sri Ramanujacharya and told him about his mother's blindness and requested him to tell her if her eyesight could be restored. Ramanujacharya asked Vishnuvardhana to take his mother to Kanchipuram and worship Lord Varadaraja devotedly. Lord Varadaraja is believed to be very merciful, therefore, Ramanujacharya told the king that his mother would regain her eyesight with the Lord's mercy. As Kanchipuram was ruled by Krimikantha Chola, a bigoted Shaivite King who wanted to forcibly convert Ramanujacharya to Shaivism, Vishnuvardhana did not want to take his mother there. Instead, Vishnuvardhana brought sculptors from Kanchipuram and constructed a temple for Lord Varadaraja at Maddur, which also houses the famous deity of Lord Ugra Narasimha, with the help of Ramanujacharya. Vishnuvardhana's mother worshipped Lord Varadaraja as instructed by Ramanujacharya and she regained her eyesight within forty days. Therefore, the deity has been worshipped as Kann-Varadaraja since then.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Visnu-vardhana-raksakah – One who is the saviour of King Vishnuvardhana," not only from the problems in spiritual life but also problems in the material life."

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Holy Name 91: Bauddhadhvanta-sahasramsave

Mantra: Om Bauddhadhvanta-sahasramsave Namah

Meaning – One who is like a sun to the ignorant Buddhists (Shaivaite or Jain), who were in darkness

Pastime – After escaping from the trap of the Chola King, Sri Ramanuja along with his close associates, arrived towards the present region of Karnataka and reached the village (which was presently known as Saligrama). Sri Ramanuja worshipped Lord Yoga Narasimha deity at Saligrama and established the proper procedure of worship, still, when Sri Ramanuja was in Saligrama, no one knew about him and none of them came for his darshan, or took an interest in following Vaishnavism. Further, most of the people in that region were influenced by Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism (Mayavada), etc... and when the village head along with his followers came to debate with Sri Ramanuja, Sri Ramanuja continued to debate with them for a couple of days when he understood that people are very unfortunate to grasp the philosophy of Vaishnavism, and very

much influenced by Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism (Mayavada), etc… Sri Ramanuja called his disciple, Mudaliandan or Dasarathi, and asked him to wash his feet in the pond, which is located opposite to Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy temple. Mudaliandan, who is an expansion of Lord Rama himself, did as told by Sri Ramanuja. Anyone who drank the holy water, which washed the lotus feet of great devotees, will attain bhakti. Just like the charanamrita of Saligrama shila can wash off one's sins. Sri Ramanuja who understood the fallen position of people, due to their offence at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, to make them pious, Sri Ramanuja asked Mudaliandan to wash his lotus feet in a pond, from which all the people used to fetch water for their daily usage. As usual, that day after Mudaliandan washed his lotus feet, all the people of the village fetched the sanctified water, which is now the holy water, which washed the lotus feet of great devotee Mudaliandan. Just by accepting the holy water, all the ignorant people, who used to follow Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism, etc… hearts got transformed and Sri Ramanuja easily won over them, all of them obtained self-realization and immediately they surrendered to the lotus feet of Sri Ramanujacharya. Sri Ramanujacharya gave them shelter, blessed them with transcendental knowledge and accepted them in the Vaishnava fold by giving them initiation. Even today one can have a darshan of the pond right opposite to the temple. It is known as Mudaliandan Tirtha.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Bauddhadhvanta-sahasramsave – One who is like a sun to the ignorant Buddhists (Shaivaite or Jain), who were in darkness."

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Holy Name 92: Sesa-rupa-pradarsakah

Mantra: Om Sesa-rupa-pradarsakaya Namah

Meaning – One who showed his Adisesha form

Pastime – By the influence of Sri Ramanuja, the Jain King Vittaladeva or Bittideva surrendered to Sri Ramanuja and embraced Vaishnavism. Sri Ramanuja initiated him in Vaishnavism and gave him the name, Vishnuvardhana. The Jain scholars, who were under the royalty of the King, were all taken aback, at King Vishnuvardhana's court everyone was shocked at the decision of the king to embrace Vaishnavism and become a disciple of Sri Ramanuja. As they were not willing to accept Vaishnavism they invited Ramanuja for a debate to refute Vaishnavism and reclaim the king to their fold. Ramanuja agreed to enter into a debate on the condition that all of them embrace Vaishnavism if they lose in the debate. Over a thousand Jain scholars gathered at Thondanur to refute Ramanuja and Vaishnavism. Ramanuja needs to argue with all thousand Jain scholars. So, Sri Ramanuja told the Jain scholars that he would sit behind the curtain in Lord Narasimha's temple and argue with them. Jain scholars agreed to the proposal. Sri Ramanuja asked one of his attendants to pull the curtain that was hung between the scholars and him as soon as the debate started. All the

Jain scholars started asking questions and Ramanuja started to answer all of them without any hesitation or nervousness. As Ramanuja started to refute one scholar after another, one of the disciples peeped into the curtain out of curiosity to see how Ramanuja was handling everything with ease, and answering a thousand people at the same time. To his astonishment, the disciple saw a thousand hooded Adisesha instead of Sri Ramanuja and the disciple immediately came out of the curtain due to shock and told others about what he saw. Since then everyone understood, Sri Ramanuja to be a manifestation of Adisesha. A thousand hooded Adisesha is painted on the wall in Lord Narasimha's temple in Thondanur to commemorate this pastime.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sesa-rupa-pradarsakah – One who showed his Adisesha form."

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Holy Name 93: Nagari-krta-vedadrah

Mantra: Om Nagari-krta-vedadraye Namah

Meaning – One who developed the town of Vedadri, Thiru Narayanapuram

Pastime – As per the legend, Lord Varaha, who is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and personification of Vedas, rescued the Goddess Bhudevi from the demon Hiranyaksha. During the rescue process, heavy sweat emerged from Lord Varaha and Goddess Bhudevi. Kalyani Tirtha in the region of present-day Melukote formed out of these sweat drops. It is believed that River Ganga water enters Kalyani Tirtha during Phalguna month. In this way, the holy water made the abode of Melkote prominent.

In Satya-yuga, Sanantkumar installed the deity of Lord Thirunarayana, which was worshipped by his father, Lord Brahma, in this place. During his time, the town was known as "Narayanadri" and worship of Lordship continued. Further, In Treta Yuga, the place was known as Vedadri because Lord Dattatreya, who is an incarnation of the Supreme Lord, arrived at this place and performed penances at this place and worshipped the deity of Lord Thirunarayana. Also, Lord Dattatreya taught the Vedic knowledge to his disciples in the surrounding mountains. Also, great personalities such as Medhatithi and Prahlada studied the Vedic scriptures under the guidance of Dattatreya. Then onwards, the place of Vedadri became the sitting place of transcendental knowledge. Several great sages such as Narada, Vyasa, Bhrugu, Shandilya etc. came here to acquire knowledge, this place is also known as Dnyana Mantapa meaning "The house of knowledge".

In Dwapar Yuga, the place was known as Yadugiri because the Yadu family often came down to worship Lord Narayana, and the glory of the Lord spread far and wide. In Kali Yuga, the place glories were hidden due to the bad influence of the age. In the 11th century, the place was reestablished by Sri Ramanuja, who is a

prominent saint, then onwards the place became known as Yati Shaila because Sri Ramanuja, who is Yati (Sannyasi), rebuilt and revived the place. Further, this great Yati, Sri Ramanuja, lived on these hills for several decades, due to which the place received the name, Yati Shaila. During Sri Ramanuja times, he established firmly the Thiru Narayanapuram as the place of learning transcendental knowledge, which would give liberation from material entanglement. Thus, Sri Ramanuja ensured the name of the holy abode, Vedadri, was re-established along with the deity of Lord Thirunarayana.

Further, once, Lord Vishnu was deeply engrossed in Yoga-Nidra, a type of contemplation on cosmic developments, and a demon king called Virochana stole the Lord's crown. Virochana took the crown to neither worlds and hid it there. Garuda, the Lord's chosen vehicle, became furious as soon as he came to know about the theft. Garuda went in search of Virochana and located him in neither world. Garuda asked Virochana to return the Lord's crown and Virochana refused to give the crown back. Being blinded by the pride of being the king of demons and his immense power, Virochana provoked Garuda to fight with him. Garuda vanquished Virochana in a fierce battle and took back the crown from him. Garuda was taking the crown to Vaikuntha to give it back to the Lord and, on the way, Garuda saw little Krishna playing in the hot sun in Vrindavan. As it was very hot, Garuda expanded his wings to protect Lord Krishna from the scorching rays of the sun. Being captivated by the enchanting form of the Lord, Garuda presented the crown to Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna presented the same crown to the deity.

Some sages were performing a sacrifice at Naimisharanya and Lord Balarama came there. All the sages rose from their seats and received Lord Balarama. However, Romaharshana, a Suta disciple of Sage Veda Vyasa, did not rise from the Vyasasan as he was delivering a spiritual discourse. Lord Baladeva became angry and killed Romaharshana with a blade of Kusha grass. As Lord Baladeva had killed Romaharshana, who was regarded as a wise sage, the sages at Naimisharanya advised Lord Baladeva to go on a pilgrimage to various sacred places including Tirupati, Sri-Rangam, Kurma Kshetra and other places to atone for His sin. During His pilgrimage, Lord Balarama visited Melkote and was captivated by the beautiful deity of Lord Thirunarayana. As Lord Thirunarayana's deity was very similar to that of Lord Sampath Kumara's deity, which was being worshipped by Lord Krishna, Balarama told Lord Krishna about Lord Thirunarayana's deity. Both Lord Krishna and Balarama came to Melkote once again to see the deity. Lord Krishna was so impressed with the deity that He handed over Lord Sampath Kumara's deity to the temple as the temple did not have a utsava deity for Lord Thirunarayana. As Lord Krishna and Balarama worshipped Lord Thirunarayana the place came to be known as Yadavadri. Lord Krishna also gave away the crown along with the deity. To commemorate this pastime, Ramanujacharya included the practice of decorating Lord Sampath Kumara with the crown that was offered to the deity by Lord Krishna on the penultimate day of the Brahmotsava. As the deity is decorated with a diamond

crown on the penultimate day of the Brahmotsava, people started calling it Vairamudi Seva.

Vairamudi Seva is celebrated during every Brahmotsava even today. The crown, which is normally kept in the Mandya Treasury, is brought in a casket to the temple on the day of the Seva. The crown is not supposed to be exposed to the sunlight and one should not see the crown directly unless it is decorating Lord Sampath Kumara's head. The crown is placed before Ramanujacharya's sannidhi till evening. A designated priest covers his eyes with a cloth, takes the crown from the casket after sunset, and decorates the deity without directly seeing it. The deity is brought out of the temple after it is decorated with the crown and taken in a procession around the temple. After the utsava, the deity is taken back to the temple. The crown is removed from the Lord's head and placed back in the casket before sunrise on the following day. People can see the crown only when it is worn by Lord Sampath Kumara on Vairamudi day. Therefore, thousands of people from all walks of life and various parts of the globe throng Melkote on Vairamudi day.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Nagari-krta-vedadrah – One who developed the town of Vedadri, Thiru Narayanapuram."

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Holy Name 94: Dillisvara-samarcitah

Mantra: Om Dillisvara-samarcitaya Namah

Meaning – One who is worshipped by the Sultan of Delhi

Pastime – In Melukote, Sri Ramanuja carefully selected some of his very good disciples to render worship to Lord Thirunarayana, after retrieving the deity, and the deity was being worshipped following the scriptures. According to Sri Narada Pancharatra Agama, the branch of Vedic scriptures that deals with deity worship, a temple should ideally have a utsava deity, which is an expansion of the main deity that is installed in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. As the main deity cannot be moved or taken out of the sanctum sanctorum, the utsava (procession) deities are taken out of the temples to participate in various festivities that are organized within the temple precincts and outside the temple as part of the rituals ordained in the scriptures. The utsava deities receive all the worship and services that are performed outside the sanctum sanctorum on behalf of the main deities, which are called Dhruva bheri. As Lord Thirunarayana did not have a utsava deity, Ramanuja was concerned about it and was planning to get a utsava deity for the temple. Lord Thirunarayana appeared in Ramanuja's dream and said, "My son, I am very pleased with your services. Our utsava deity form was taken to Delhi by an emperor called Emadh (Mohammed) and it is in the palace of the emperor. As our utsava deity is a live deity, gratify Me by bringing it back and worshipping it."

Sri Ramanuja woke up and became very happy. Ramanuja informed his disciples including Vishnuvardhana about the Lord's orders and started preparations to leave for Delhi. Ramanuja carefully selected some very learned and devoted disciples to accompany him in his mission to bring the utsava deity of Lord Thirunarayana back to Melkote. After walking for many days and traversing through many kingdoms Ramanuja reached Delhi and met the Muslim king, who was ruling over Delhi and its surrounding areas. The king was impressed with Ramanuja's learning, bodily complexion, conduct, and attitude. The King asked Ramanuja to seek whatever he wanted. Ramanuja told the king that he had brought the utsava deity of Lord Thirunaraya when he invaded south India along with him and requested the king to return the deity as it was very dear to him. The king asked Ramanuja to collect the deity from his warehouse, where the deities that were brought during his invasions were stored. Ramanuja accompanied the king's trusted courtiers to the warehouse to collect the utsava deity. Ramanuja saw thousands of utsava deities that were brought from various temples across the country but could not find the deity that he was searching for. Ramanuja felt dejected and retired to the quarters that were allotted to him by the king that night. Ramanuja requested the Lord to guide him in his mission and retired to bed that night.

Lord Thirunarayana once again appeared in Ramanuja's dream and asked him to search for the utsava deity in the princess's room as the princess had kept the deity within the confines of her chamber due to her love for the deity. The following morning Ramanuja went to the king's court and told the king that the Lord had appeared in his dream and had asked him to search for the deity in the princess's chamber. The king was surprised. Though men were not allowed to enter the quarters of the queens and princesses in those days, the king personally took Ramanuja to the princess's chamber to see if Ramanuja's claims were true. The princess had gone out of the palace along with her associates for a short time. Ramanuja searched the entire chamber in the presence of the king and could not find the deity. Out of dejection, Ramanuja started to intensely pray to the Lord to reveal Himself in His deity form and started to chant some of the hymns compiled by the Alwars. Further, with love, Sri Ramanuja called, "Thirunarayana, En Selva Pillaye, Vaaraay", which means, "Oh Lord Thirunarayana, my beloved son, please come!" by hearing these words of Sri Ramanuja, the utsava deity, which was lying in a sleeping posture on the princess's bed, rose from the bed on its own and started walking towards Ramanuja. The deity came to Ramanuja and sat on his lap. Filled with emotion Sri Ramanuja called him, "You are my Chella Pillai! You are my treasure (Sampath)". As the deity fondly came and sat on Ramanuja's lap the deity came to call "Cheluva Pillai or Selva Pillai" or "Sampath Kumara". The Muslim king and everyone present there were astonished to see the deity walking. The Muslim King (Sultan of Delhi) was astonished by the turn of events. He honoured Ramanuja and allowed him to go back to Melkote along with the deity as he had expressed his desire to return at the earliest.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Dillisvara-samarcitah – One who is worshipped by the Sultan of Delhi.”

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Holy Name 95: Narayana-pratisthatah

Mantra: Om Narayana-pratisthatre Namah

Meaning – One who established the deity of Lord Thirunarayana

Pastime – In the beginning, Lord Narayana appeared to Lord Brahma in a deity form on his request. Lord Brahma was performing worship to the deity in Satya loka for many thousands of years. Later at the request of his son, Sanatkumara, he gave the Lord’s deity to him, and he continued to worship. In Satya-yuga, Sanatkumara decided to install the deity on the earth, accordingly, he selected the place on the earth, which is the region of present-day Melkote, for establishing the deity of Lord Thirunarayana and finally installed the deity of Lord Narayana and continued to worship for several centuries. While Sanatkumara was performing worship, the place was known as Narayanadri, during then several sages and pious people used to reside in the abode of Lord Thirunarayana, and the worship of Lordship used to occur in great pomp. The same festivity and worship continued for Lord Thirunarayana in Treta-yuga and Dvapara-yuga. In Kali-yuga, even though the worship was continued, still, over time, it was reduced and due to the influence of envious rulers, the worship stopped altogether and the deity of Lord Thirunarayana ended up in the mud pit.

During the 11th century, on the divine order of Lord Narayana, Sri Ramanuja arrived at this place, revived the deity from the mud pit, reestablished the deity and constructed the shrine with the help of his disciple, King Vishnuvardhana, and reestablished worship of Lord Thirunarayana.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Narayana-pratisthatah – One who established the deity of Lord Thirunarayana.”

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Holy Name 96: Sampat-putra-vimocakah

Mantra: Om Sampat-putra-vimocakaya Namah

Meaning – One who retrieved the deity of Lord Sampat Kumara (Selva Pillai)

Pastime – After Lord Rama's crowning ceremony, he gave his worshipable deity, Lord Ranganatha, to the newly crowned Lankan King Vibheeshana. After this, Lord Rama was left without a deity for his daily worship. Then, Lord Brahma gave the deity of Lord Selva-Narayana, which is the procession deity, to Lord Rama. (The main deity of Selva-Narayana was already given by Lord Brahma to his son Sanantkumara, who established the same in Narayanadri and continued to

worship). Later, Lord Rama passed this on to his sons Lava and Kusha. When Kusha's daughter got married to a Yadava prince, the deity was given as part of the gifts and thus the deity idol landed up in the Lunar dynasty from the Solar dynasty. Over time, in the Lunar dynasty, Supreme Lord Krishna along with his expansion Balarama appeared and worshipped the deity of Lord Selva-Narayana. Years went by when Lord Balarama came to the place of Narayanadri or Vedadri or Yadadri on a religious trip, he found the main deity resembling the one in his home, back in Dwaraka. After hearing the words of Balarama, Lord Krishna along with Balarama came back to the place with the deity and they decided that this was the ideal Utsava (procession) deity for Thiru Narayanan and placed it. Then onwards, the deity, which was worshipped by Lord Rama and Lord Krishna was established as the procession deity of Lord Thirunarayana.

But, over time, the deity of Lord Selva-Narayana (Rama Priya) was stolen by the Islamic invaders and it ended up in the palace of the Delhi Sultan along with several hundreds of deities, which were stolen by them. This time to bring back the deity, Sri Ramanuja, who is none other than Balarama, who appeared in Kali-yuga for the service of his master, arrived at Thirunarayanapuram and reestablished its glories. Further, on the divine order of Lord Thirunarayana, he went all the way to Delhi and brought back the deity of Lord Selva-Narayana, who was also known as Sampat Kumara or Selva Pillai or Rama Priya.

In this case, Adisesha, who is the eternal servant of Lord Narayana was always in the service of his master. As in his original form as Adi-sesha, he always served the lotus feet of Lord Narayana. When he appeared as Lakshmana, the brother of Lord Rama, he worshipped the deity of Lord Selva-Narayana, when he appeared as Balarama, the brother of Lord Krishna, he worshipped the deity of Lord Selva-Narayana and brought it to Narayandri and installed Lord Selva-Narayana deity as Utasava deity of Lord Thirunarayana. At last, when he appeared as Sri Ramanuja, he took up the task of re-establishing the glory of Lord Thirunarayana and his town, further went all the way to Delhi to reclaim the procession deity, Selva-Narayana, and brought back the town of Thirunarayanapuram. In this way, Adisesha is always associated with the legend of Lord Thirunarayana and Lord Selva-Narayana.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sampat-putra-vimocakah – One who retrieved the deity of Lord Sampat Kumara (Selva Pillai)."

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Holy Name 97: Sampat-kumara-janakah

Mantra: Om Sampat-kumara-janakaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the father of Lord Sampat Kumara (Selva Pillai), the procession deity of Thirunarayanapuram temple

Pastime – On the order of Lord Thirunarayana, Sri Ramanuja visited the court of the Delhi Sultan and found the procession deity of Thirunarayana, which is Rama Priyan or Selva Pillai, and after the farewell from the Sultan, Sri Ramanuja started back to Melkote. The deity of Selva Pillai was kept in the inner chambers of the princess of the Sultan, being attached to the deity, the princess used to serve Lord Selva Pillai with love and affection. As the princess was very attached to the deity, Sri Ramanuja thought that the king might ask him to return the deity if the princess asked the king when she returned to the palace. Ramanuja abandoned the main roads and started travelling through the forests along with his disciples to ensure that the king's men did not catch up with them if they wanted to take the deity back. The princess returned to the palace and was disturbed when she could not find the deity. She got to know that a saint from south India had taken the deity back to Melkote from one of the palace workers. She immediately went to the king and requested her father to return the deity to her. She also told her father that she loved the deity and treated the deity as her husband. The king was shocked to know about the princess's relationship with the deity and tried to convince her saying that the deity does not belong to their faith. As the princess was adamant, the king deputed a contingent of armed forces under her to bring the deity back. The princess was accompanied by some able generals and they started searching for Ramanuja and his disciples to take the deity back from them.

The princess and the soldiers reached the borders of their kingdom and, yet, they could not trace Ramanuja. Therefore, the generals decided not to go further as the neighbouring king was hostile towards them and was planning to return to inform the king about their inability to trace Ramanuja and his disciples. When all the soldiers were fast asleep, the princess abandoned her royal robes and stealthily escaped from the army camp. She started travelling towards Melkote. Ramanuja reached Melkote with the help of some tribals and started worshipping Sampath Kumara as instructed by Lord Thirunarayana in a secret chamber fearing that the Muslim king might once again take the deity back to appease his daughter. After a few days, the princess reached Melkote and requested Ramanuja to show her the deity. Though Ramanuja initially declined to show the deity he allowed the princess to worship the deity personally ignoring the fact that she was a Muslim by birth due to her excessive natural devotion to the Lord. Sri Ramanuja would often say that the princess was a part manifestation of Goddess Mahalakshmi. The princess used to worship the deity with a lot of devotion and one fine day she merged with the deity along with her body. In due course of time, the princess became popular as Bibinachchiyar and a deity of Bibinachchiyar is worshipped along with that of Sampath Kumara (Selva Pillai) at Melkote to commemorate this pastime of the Lord.

Despite being a Muslim by birth, Bibinachchiyar became an adorable deity of the Hindus in general and the Vaishnavas in particular due to her intense devotion to the Supreme Lord. A devotee is above all material limitations. Therefore, Ramanujacharya had allowed Bibinachchiyar to personally worship Lord Sampath

Kumara and the Lord took her to His abode through His deity form even when she was alive.

In this incident, Sri Ramanuja acted as the father of Lord Selva Pillai, when a Muslim princess expressed her desire to worship and be with Lord Selva Pillai, Sri Ramanuja understood the heart-felt desire of his son, Lord Selva Pillai, allowed the princess to do service to the deity. By this, Sri Ramanuja became an instrument for the marriage between Lord Sampath Kumara (Selva Pillai) and Goddess Bibinachchiyar (Muslim princess), later, Sri Ramanuja installed the deity of Bibinachchiyar at the lotus feet of Lord Sampath Kumara. From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sampat-kumara-janakah – One who is the father of Lord Sampat Kumara (Selva Pillai), the procession deity of Thirunarayanapuram temple."

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Holy Name 98: Sadhu-loka-sikhamani

Mantra: Om Sadhu-loka-sikhamanaye Namah

Meaning – One who is crest-jewel among all the Sadhus

Pastime – During and after Sri Ramanuja, there were several Acharyas and scholars came in the line of Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya. By following the path established by Sri Ramanuja, there lived an Acharya known as Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan, who was an expert in both Sri Bhashyam and Bhagavat Vishayam (Aspects of General Devotional Services). Once when Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan was at Siruppuththur, there came a devotee named, Somasiyandan, who wished to learn Sri Bhashyam from him and accordingly, he learned the same three times under his able guidance. After completing his studies, before going to his place, Somasiyandan asks Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan to give him some valuable instructions and Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan says "You are an expert in explaining other philosophies and establishing the Vaishnava philosophy through Sri Bhashyam. Instead of being proud of that, always think that the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja are our only refuge all the time." This valuable instruction is the base for all the Sri Vaishnava Acharyas and Devotees. The great acharyas like Vedanta Desikar, Manavala Mahamunigal, etc… who came much later to Sri Ramanuja and became prominent Acharya in Sri Vaishnava lineage, still, obediently followed the path established by Sri Ramanuja.

Further, The line of preceptors (Guru Parampara) is the most important requisite for a Vaishnava community. It is a link to get connected with the divine couple Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Narayana. The Guru initiates the disciple in the divine mantra thus linking him to the Guru Parampara. Sri Ramanuja is hailed as the central pendant (crest-jewel) in the linking jewel necklace of Acharyas (Acharya Ratna Haaram). Sri Ramanuja was initiated at Madhurantakam by Poornaarya (Mahapurna or Periya Nambi). It was Lord Varada of Kanchi who ordained Sri

Ramanuja to resort to Poornarya. Thus he got connected with Yamunacharya, Nathamuni, and Nammazhwar, which extend up to Lord Narayana. Later Sri Ramanuja initiated Koorathaazhwan, Embar, Dasarathi, Arulalaperumal Emberumanar, Pillan and such illustrious Acharyas. The line has continued uninterruptedly to date. So, Sri Ramanuja became the central pendant (crest-jewel) for the Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya by which he linked the Acharyas before and after him. Even though several acharyas came before Sri Ramanuja and several acharyas after Sri Ramanuja, he remains the central pendant (crest-jewel) forever.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sadhu-loka-sikhamani – One who is crest-jewel among all the Sadhus."

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Holy Name 99: Supratisthita-govindarajah

Mantra: Om Supratisthita-govindarajaya Namah

Meaning – One who re-installed the deity of Lord Govindaraja, which was moved by the envious Chola King and Shavities.

Pastime – Once Sri Ramanuja got the news that the divine abode of the Supreme Lord known as Thiruchittirakutam (present-day Chidambaram) was in great danger of being destroyed and that the processional deity of Sri Govindaraja had somehow been saved by some devout Srivaishnavas and brought to Tirupati. The main deity of Lord Govindaraja, in the form of the Lord reclining in the milk ocean, had been thrown into the sea by the envious Chola King and follower of Shavites. Actually, Lord Sri Govindaraja appeared in Tiruchittirakutam to please the Sage Kanva who was observing penance on the banks of the river Cauvery. Further, for the pleasure of Lord Govindaraja, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati performed a dance performance. That is the reason, the temple had the shrine of Lord Govindaraja and at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, are the shrine of Lord Nataraja (Divine dancer, the name of Lord Shiva) and Goddess Paravati. This made the Shaivas, the followers of Lord Shiva, greatly envious, and they started to attack the Vaishnavas, the followers of Lord Vishnu. This is a great turmoil in Southern India. The desecration of this Thiruchittirakutam temple was part of the large-scale destruction of Vishnu temples by a Chola King, who was an ardent follower of Lord Shiva and took the said of envious Shaivas. Chola King did this out of religious madness and further, he used to force people to accept Shaivism. This situation made Sri Ramanuja move out from Sri Rangam incognito. This Chola King is identified as the King whose neck developed a carbuncle and was infested with worms (Krimi-kanta) which caused his death.

After the death of Krimi-kanta Chola, the successor King was less harmful to the Vaishnavas, and this made Sri Ramanuja return to Sri Rangam. Even though he returned, Sri Ramanuja was still deeply stirred and grieved that an ancient

temple, which was sung by great devotees like, Sri Kulashekara Azhwar and Thirumangai Azhwar should be so destroyed. He believed that the shrine, which was the object of the Azhwars' glorification and Sage Kanva, would not suffer total destruction and was bound to appear again. Because the Shavitis were dominant in the temple of Thiruchittirakutam (present-day Chidambaram). So, Sri Ramanuja decided to have the processional deity established in a temple in Tirupati for the present. He informed his beloved disciple, the Yadava king (King Yadavaraya) of his intention of establishing the utsava murti (processional deity), worshipped as Lord Devadhideva (Lord of the Demigods), in Tirupati. Further, he retained the Main deity from the Ocean with the help of the devotees and brought it to Tirupati, unfortunately, the Main deity was damaged and it can't be re-installed. So Sri Ramanuja thought and asked his disciple to get the new deity craved with similar features and after that, he secretly extracted the divine presence of the Lord from the main deity by prescribed rites and transferred it to a new deity and established both Lord Govindaraja (Main deity) and the processional deity (which was earlier recovered from Tiruchitrakutam) Devatideva established by the side of the lake in the southern part of Tirupati by the Vedic rites of Vaikhanasa agama. Further, Sri Ramanuja kept the old and damaged deity of Lord Govindaraja at yet another pond in Tirupati.

After this, under the command of Sri Ramanuja, the king established a big temple for Lord Govindaraja (Newly established deities) in the southern part of Tirupati and developed a township around the temple named Ramanujapura. Sri Ramanuja though greatly attached to Lord Sri Ranganatha of Sri Rangam, still, he travelled to Tirupati and Tirumala several times and continued to reform the temples in conformity with ancient tradition.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Supratisthita-govindarajah – One who re-installed the deity of Lord Govindaraja, which was moved by the envious Chola King and Shavities".

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Holy Name 100: Purna-manorathah

Mantra: Om Purna-manorathaya Namah

Meaning – One whose desire was fulfilled

Pastime – Due to the atrocities of the Chola King, Sri Ramanuja moved out from Sri Rangam for four decades, but after the death of the Chola King, his son asked for forgiveness from Sri Ramanuja. After this, Sri Ramanuja moved to Sri Rangam and re-established the worship and services to Lord Ranganatha. In Sri Rangam, Sri Ramanuja was very much concerned about Kuresha's blindness and the hardships that he was facing due to that. Actually, Kuresha went to Chola King in disguise of Sri Ramanuja and took the suffering on him, which actually targeted Sri Ramanuja.

So, Sri Ramanujacharya asked Kuresha to request Lord Varadaraja of Kanchipuram to restore his eyesight after gratifying the Lord by composing some works to glorify Him and worshipping Him with devotion. As instructed by Ramanujacharya, Kuresha went to Kanchipuram and started worshipping Lord Varadaraja with devotion during his stay in Kanchipuram. Being gratified by Kuresha, the Lord asked him to seek a boon. Instead of requesting the Lord to restore his eyesight, Kuresha requested the Lord to reform Nalluran, who had instigated the Chola king to blind him by plucking his eyes and was instrumental in driving away Ramanujacharya from Sri Rangam and bless him with devotion. Kuresha was such an advanced devotee that he did not have ill will even towards those who were responsible for all the hardships that he had to undergo.

Lord Varadaraja's temple priests told Ramanujacharya that Kuresha had requested the Lord to bless Nalluran with devotion and to mend his ways. Ramanujacharya became very disappointed and summoned Kuresha. Ramanujacharya asked Kuresha to explain why he requested the Lord to bless Nalluran, who was responsible for all the hardships that he had suffered, instead of seeking the restoration of his eyesight. Kuresha said, "If I get back my eyesight only I would benefit, but if a person like Nalluran is reformed, many people's eyesight would be saved. Moreover, I find it difficult to seek anything for myself from the Lord."

Ramanuja was moved by Kuresha's selfless devotion to the Lord. Out of his concern and love for Kuresha, Ramanujacharya said, "My dear Kuresha, go back to Kanchipuram once again and request the Lord to restore your eyesight. The merciful Lord will restore your eyesight out of His concern for a devotee like you."

Following the directions of Ramanujacharya, Kuresha once again went to Kanchipuram and started glorifying Lord Varadaraja with profound Sanskrit verses compiled by him. Lord Varadaraja once again asked Kuresha if he needed anything. Kuresha, who was very detached, said, "My Lord due to my misfortune I have lost my eyesight. Though I do not aspire to see beautiful things in this material world, I want to see my guru and Your enchanting form. Please bless me with enough eyesight to see You and my guru."

Kuresha went to sleep that night and when he returned to the temple the following day he could see the deity. Kuresha became very happy and started dancing. Kuresha returned to Sri Rangam immediately after that and went to Ramanujacharya's monastery to see him. When Ramanuja asked him the reason for not requesting the Lord to completely restore his eyesight, Kuresha said, "With great difficulty, I have overcome my cravings for beautiful things on this planet. If I start seeing them once again I might become attached to them. Therefore, I requested the Lord to bless me with enough eyesight to see Him and you."

Another version of the story is when Kuresha asked for Nalluran's liberation, during then Sri Ramanuja became upset and decided not to see Lord Varadaraja because he deprived him of fulfilling his desire, which is to get back the eyes of Kuresha. During this time, Lord Varadaraja fulfilled the desire of Sri Ramanuja by giving back the eyes of Kuresha.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Purna-manorathah – One whose desire or wishes was fulfilled."

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Holy Name 101: Godagrajah

Mantra: Om Godagrajaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the elder brother of Goddess Andal (Goda-devi)

Pastime – After fulfilling the desire of Goddess Andal (Goda), which is to offer a special type of Khree (Akkaravadisal) in 100 huge vessels to Lord Sundarabhau (Kalazhagar) at Thirumaliranchola‌i, Sri Ramanuja directly went to Srivilluputtur, Mother Goda's birthplace, from Thirumaliranchola‌i and spent some time worshipping the beautiful deity of Lord Krishna, who is known as Vata Patra Sayi and get soaked in the mercy of Mother Goda.

During this time, Sri Ramanuja was passing by the garden of the Vata Patra Sayi temple, this is the garden in which Goddess Andal appeared to Sri Vishnu-chitta under a Tulasi plant, Goddess Andal was very elated by the service and love shown by Sri Ramanuja to fulfil her heart-felt desire, So Goddess Andal came forward for few yards from her shrine and with love called Sri Ramanuja as "My Brother," more specifically in Tamil, 'Em Annano!'. Sri Ramanuja heard the calling and saw the divine mother, Goddess Andal, he was very much pleased by the reciprocation of Goddess Andal. Then onwards, Sri Ramanuja is considered as an elder brother of Goddess Andal, Godagrajah, and Sri Ramanuja was deeply in love with Thiruppavai, which is the composition of Goddess Andal. Therefore, Sri Ramanuja was also known as Thiruppavai Jyeer. Every year on the 27th day of Margazhi, Akkarai vadisal is made as an offering to Lord Sundarabhau (Kalazhagar) at Thirumaliranchola‌i, to commemorate this incident. Similarly, every year a special celebration is organized at Srivilluputtur, Tamil Nadu.

Further, When Andal pines for union with Lord Srinivasa and sends the clouds, the rains, etc. as messengers to the Lord. She appeals to the cuckoo to call the Lord and requests Kamadeva (Manmatha-cupid) to take her to Lord Srinivasa. Her devotion inspired Ananthalvan in his service at the Hills. Sri Ramanuja was known as Tiruppavai Jiyar and was reciting the Tiruppavai of Andal daily. Andal was known as his sister by tradition "*Perumpudur mamunikkup pinnanal valiye* - Glory to the one younger to Sri Ramanuja", So by understanding the desire of his transcendental sister Andal, Ramanuja sends Ananthalvan, a great devotee of

Andal to Thirumala. Ananthalvan composed Goda Catusloki singing the praise of Andal.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Godagrajah – One who is the elder brother of Goddess Andal (Goda-devi).”

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Holy Name 102: Digvijetre

Mantra: Om Digvijetre Namah

Meaning – One who obtained victory in all directions

Pastime – After completing his Sri Bhashya, Sri Ramanuja decided to tour the length and breadth of the country to preach the philosophy of the Azhwars headed by Nammazhwar, and Yamunacharya. Accompanied by his disciples, Sri Ramanuja first went to Kanchipuram and offered his prayers to Lord Varadaraja and thanked the Lord for helping him in writing the commentary. With the permission of the Lord, Ramanuja went to Kumbakonam and had a debate with the local scholars and convinced them to embrace Visistadwaita. Ramanuja reached Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas, and the center of the Divya-Prabandha literature. The Pandya king was overjoyed to see Ramanuja in his court and received him with great honours. Many great scholars who were well-read in the Prabandha lore came to see Ramanuja and to congratulate him for having successfully refuted Mayavada in his commentary. Some of them became his disciples. Sri Ramanuja in the course of his journey, visited Dwaraka, Mathura, Vrindavana, Salagrama Kshetra in Nepal, Badarikashrama, Naimisharanya, Pushkara and other important places like Dev-Prayag and Joshimutt, which he came across on the way. Many scholars and laymen became his disciples being impressed with his knowledge and devotion. Ramanuja eventually reached Kashmir. By this Dig-vijaya, Sri Ramanuja’s fame spread far and wide.

Further, once Sri Ramanuja went to Thiruvananthapuram to have a darshan of the famous deity of Lord Anantha Padmanabhaswamy. After staying for some time, he proposed the method of Pancharatrik for the worship of Lord Anantha Padmanabha. When scholars and priests expressed their concerns, Sri Ramanuja debated and won over them. Further, as he proposed, he wanted to establish the temple ritual of Thiruvananthapuram temple, because they were following the system of Tantric method of worship, Ramanuja wanted to worship the Lord according to the Pancharatrik method. So, he told the priests of the temple and the King of the region. The Priests, who are the servants of Lord Anantha Padmanabha, sincerely prayed to Lord Anantha Padmanabha, The Supreme Lord doesn’t want to see the conflicts between his devotees, so he ordered his bird carrier Garuda, to carry Sri Ramanuja out of Thiruvananthapuram. When Sri Ramanuja went to sleep that night, Garuda carried Sri Ramanuja and took out of Thiruvananthapuram and placed Sri Ramanuja on the rock at Thirukkurungudi,

the abode of Lord Thirukkurungudi Nambi and all his followers were at the Thiruvananthapuram. A similar incident occurred even in Jagannatha Puri, where Sri Ramanuja won over the scholars and priests and wished to worship Lord Jagannatha as per the Pancharatrik method, here Supreme Lord didn't want any conflict between his devotees, so he moved Sri Ramanuja to Sri Kurmam, the abode of Lord Kurma.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Digvijetre – One who obtained victory in all directions," from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, he won over everyone and established the supremacy of Lord Narayana, even in the Vaishnava community he tried to organise the system, but some cases Lord enacts the pastime with his dear devotee, Sri Ramanuja.

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Holy Name 103: Godabhista-prapurakah

Mantra: Om Godabhista-prapurakaya Namah

Meaning – One who fulfilled the heart-felt desire of Godesses Andal (Goda-devi)

Pastime – Once Ramanujacharya was giving a lecture on Thiruppavai, the thirty sacred hymns sung in the glory of the Supreme Lord by Mother Goda. In the 27th hymn, Mother Goda has promised to offer "akkara vadisal", a type of special kheer, to Lord Sundarabahu Perumal of Thirumalirancholai, near Madurai, if her desire to get married to Lord Ranganatha is fulfilled. The self-manifested deity of the Supreme Lord in Thirumalirancholai has beautiful broad shoulders and is called Sundarabahu due to that. Ramanuja realized that Mother Andal did not have an opportunity to fulfil her promise to the Lord as she disappeared from this planet immediately after getting married to Lord Ranganatha.

Therefore, Ramanuja decided to fulfil the promise made by Mother Andal and went to Thirumalirancholai along with his disciples. Following the promise made by Mother Goda, Ramanuja prepared large quantities of akkara vadisal and offered 108 pots of it to Lord Sundarabahu. As the offering was going on, a divine ethereal voice emanated from the sanctum in which a deity of Mother Goda was enshrined and the voice said "Anna", which means elder brother. Therefore, the devotees believed that Mother Goda accepted Ramanujacharya as her elder brother for having fulfilled her promise to the Lord and glorified him as the elder brother of Mother Goda.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Godabhista-prapurakah – One who fulfilled the heart-felt desire of Godesses Andal (Goda-devi)."

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Holy Name 104: Sarva-samsaya-vicchetre

Mantra: Om Sarva-samsaya-vicchetre Namah

Meaning – One who cleared all the doubts of his disciples

Pastime – Vangi Purathu Achi is the father of Vangi Purathu Nambi and he becomes the disciple of Manakal Nambi and stays in Sri Rangam serving his Guru and he begot the son named, Vangi Purathu Nambi, later he goes on to become a disciple of Sri Ramanuja. Vangi Purathu Nambi was instrumental in the revelation of Virodhi Pariharam, one of the classic scriptures of Sri Vaishnavism. Once when Vangi Purathu Nambi goes to Sri Ramanuja and asks him, “What hurdles that a Vaishnava will face while in this Material World?”, for this, Sri Ramanuja gives a list of 83 hurdles. Vangi Purathu Nambi documents those 83 hurdles with a detailed explanation of each one of those hurdles as heard from Sri Ramanuja. In this scripture, each aspect of the Vaishnava's lives is analyzed bit by bit and clear guideline is presented for everyone to handle each particular aspect.

Further, once Sri Ramanuja with the desire to have the darshan of Lord Vaithamanidhi Perumal, Thirukolur started his travel. Being the appearance place of Madhurakavi Azhwar it had a special significance and is believed that one who reaches this place and has a darshan of the Lord hardly ever wishes to leave the place due to the incomparable divine beauty of the Lord Vaithamanidhi Perumal. Sri Ramanuja walked along with his disciples to have the Lord’s Darshan. En route, all people from the nearby villages had arrived to seek the blessings of great Acharya Ramanuja. Among them, one humble lady, whose profession was “selling curds” prostrated and offered her obeisances to Sri Ramanuja. Sri Ramanuja pleased with her devotion asked her where she coming from. The lady replied that she was from Thirukolur and now she was leaving Thirukolur once and for all. Sri Ramanuja was surprised at her words and smiled and then Sri Ramanuja quoted a line from Nammazhwar’s Pashuram.

My child “How is that when all people are waiting here to go to Thirukolur whereas you have decided to leave the divine place… My child You know …. Thirukolur is a holy place and most sought after by the devotees who rush to be among the wonderful people there worshipping the Lordship. The lady who was glowing with effulgence replied eloquently in a free-flowing and unimpeded manner a set of eighty rhetorical questions, which referred to various divine incidents in the lives of sages, saints, and the Lordships and saying that her ineligibility to stay at Thirukolur. In each of the questions, she compares the depth of devotion displayed by the many great devotees and thus submits her ineligibility to worship the Lordship and has no right to expect that the Lord would specially treat her. Hearing the questions the lady, Sri Ramanuja answered her in a very convincing way. After hearing the responses to her questions from Sri Ramanuja, immediately she left the plan of travelling out of Thirukolur and surrendered at the Lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja and became a disciple of Sri Ramanuja. Talks between the Lady and Sri Ramanuja are later compiled by Sri Thiruvaimozhi Pillai and called as “Thirukolur Pen Pillai Rahasyam” which

provides deep insights for an aspiring devotee to spiritual progress in a material world.

Further, When Maraneri Nambi, who is the disciple of Sri Yamunacharya, was in his final days, he had to endure great bodily difficulties. At that time, he becomes worried that he won't even be able to meditate on Lord Narayana during his final moments. Looking at his state, Periya Nambi asks Sri Ramanuja "If Maraneri Nambi without thinking of Lord Narayana in his final moments will reach the Spiritual World". Sri Ramanuja replies by saying since Lord Varahadeva has guaranteed in the Sholka called Varaha Charama Shloka that if any surrendered souls or devotees are not able to think of him (Lord Narayana) during the time of death, he (Lord Narayana) will think about him (devotees) and delivers them to Spiritual World at the end of their lives. Periya Nambi then says that those words cannot be accepted since Lord Varahadeva could have just said that out of compassion and also Goddess Bhumidevi was with him, maybe to impress her, he may have said that words and he may not fulfil the words. But Sri Ramanuja replies since Goddess Bhumi Devi is with Lord Varahadev always, he is not going to say something to pacify her just at that time. Periya Nambi asks for evidence from scriptures, where it is mentioned. Immediately Sri Ramanuja quotes from Bhagavad Gita verse 4.9,

janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktva deham punar janma
naiti mam eti so 'rjuna

Meaning: One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.

After hearing the quotation from Sri Ramanuja, Periya Nambi then becomes pleased by his dear disciple.

From these incidents, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Sarva-samsaya-vicchetre – One who cleared all the doubts of his disciples."

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Holy Name 105: Visnu-loka-pradayakah

Mantra: Om Visnu-loka-pradayakaya Namah

Meaning – One who is the bestower of Lord Vishnu's abode, the spiritual world, to his followers

Pastime – Once Ramanuja was walking along with his sannyasi disciples. Stopping by a pond, he took some prasadam and threw half of it in the water for the fish. Then he got up to walk on. Just then the fish who had taken the

prasadam assumed four-handed forms and rose in the air, went to the abode of Lord Vishnu. The sannyasis stopped and began to disrobe. Ramanuja turned and asked them why they were not following. They said, "We are thunder-struck. Please explain what we have just seen. Otherwise, how can we follow behind you in this condition?" Ramanuja answered, "You've seen the power of taking Maha-prasadam." They answered, "But we are taking your Maha-prasadam daily, and this is not happening to us." Ramanuja said, "These creatures have no free will, and therefore make no offence. So they get full benefit at once. But you with your free will and human intelligence make offences, and thus you hinder your own progress." After this instructive incident, his disciples' faith in Sri Ramanuja increased manyfold. Not only this incident but further incidents like Sri Ramanuja giving liberation to the curd seller in Tirumala, etc… increased the faith of his disciples. These incidents brought confidence among the followers in the words of Lord Ranganatha to Sri Ramanuja that, whoever has a relation with Sri Ramanuja either one or another way would get liberation.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is “Visnu-loka-pradayakah – One who is the bestower of Lord Vishnu’s abode, the spiritual world, to his followers,” in this case, without any ego, the fish which got the association of Sri Ramanuja in the form of accepting the remanents of a great devotee, Sri Ramanuja. That enabled them to obtain the abode of Lord Vishnu. Further, all the disciples of Sri Ramanuja, either direct or extended, will gain liberation from this material existence by the mercy of Sri Ramanuja.

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Further, Ananthalvan, who is an incarnation of Adisesha, is the same as Sri Ramanuja. For the propagation of Vaishnavism, Sri Ramanuja engaged. For the service of Lord Srinivasa, Ananthalvan engaged. It is also a known fact that Adisesha appears simultaneously in unlimited forms for the service of his master, Lord Narayana. That’s why, Adisesha is also known as Ananta-sesha.

In Thirumala, Lord Srinivasa enacted several pastimes with his dear servant, Ananthalvan. So, Ananthalvan was once having a bath in the Swami Pushkarini. As he ascended the steps, he was astonished to find that his upper cloth got entangled in the ears of a tiger on a Peepal tree. As he was trying to retrieve the upper cloth, the tiger remained motionless. The disciples told Ananthalvan that the tiger did not want to release the upper cloth as it was desirous of the touch of the upper cloth of Ananthalvan who could deliver the tiger from the bondage of the world. They appealed to him to confer with divine boon on the tiger. Ananthalvan blessed the tiger and got his upper cloth released. The tiger was found dead on the way. The disciples did Caramakainkarya (Final ritual) for the tiger. When the disciples entered the sanctum sanctorum along with Ananthalvan, they were amazed to find the form of a tiger in the Garbhagriha. The Lord humorously mentioned to Ananthalvan,” You have started blessing even tigers with liberation which is difficult even for demigods. What work will I (Lord) have thereafter? Ananthalvan may enjoy himself on the Holy Hills and I

(Lord) may depart." Ananthalvan prayed to the Lord and told him that it was only because of the Grace of his guru, Sri Ramanuja and him (Lord Srinivasa) that he was able to liberate the tiger. Was it not true that he (Lord) has already bestowed on Sri Ramanuja and also him, who is servant of Sri Ramanuja, the blessing of his abode? Further, whoever has a relationship or is graced by Sri Ramanuja or his servants will obtain the abode of the Lord. After hearing from Ananthalvan, Lord Srinivasa was very pleased by the behaviour of his dear devotee, Ananthalvan.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Visnu-loka-pradayakah – One who is the bestower of Lord Vishnu's abode, the spiritual world, to his followers," either as Sri Ramanuja or as Ananthalvan, Sri Adisesha bestows his causeless mercy on the living entities and sanction them to get liberated from this material world and obtain the abode of Lord Vishnu.

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Holy Name 106: Avyahatamahad-vartmanah

Mantra: Om Avyahatamahad-vartmane Namah

Meaning – One who is the ultimate means to obtain liberation from material entanglement

Pastime – In Thirumala, once Ananthalvan was deeply engrossed in preparing a garland for the Lord. Lord Srinivasa wanted to test him and his dedication. A priest came from the sanctum Sanctorum to the; Yamunatturaivar Mantapam where Ananthalvan was busy with the holy task. The priest conveyed to him the Lord's direction that Ananthalvan should immediately come to the sanctum sanctorum. Ananthalvan replied, The time is very precious to me and the flowers have to be made into a garland even when the buds are blossoming. Any delay will result in the flowers withering away and the service to the Lord will be impaired". The Archaka carried Ananthalvan's refusal to the Lord. Shortly thereafter, Ananthalvan left the Yamunatturaivar Mandapa with a beautiful garland of flowers and reached the sanctum sanctorum. The Lord feigned anger at Ananthalvan's refusal to respond to his command and the curtain was lowered between Ananthalvan and the Lord. Defying the curtain, Ananthalvan went into the Garbhagriha and wondered what angered the Lord. The Lord told him," My command can never be disobeyed, even by Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva. Today you flouted my command. What will you do if I banish you from the Hills? Not for me your garlands anymore, Ananthalvan replied, "My Lord, I am here to render service to you, not at your beckoning. I have my Acharya Sri Ramanuja, who is the Lord of the Vaishnavas. He has ordered me to serve you flowers and holy water. I prefer to obey the command of my Acharya to that of you.

mayavi paramanadam tyaktva vaikunthamuttamam
Svami puskarinitire ramaya saha modate

Meaning: The Lord with all wonderful Kalyana Gunas (Auspicious qualities) and plays left Vaikunta and came to rejoice with His consort Alarmelmanga on the bank of the Swami Pushkarini

This shows that you descended on the Hills from Vaikunta. You are not a native of the Hill. You came a little earlier and I came a little later. Maybe you are the Lord of Vaikunta and the Lord of the Seven Hills. But then my Acharya Sri Ramanuja holds in his palm by your Grace, both this world and the world beyond. It is as per his order that I have come here to do the flower service for you. When, both you and I have come to the Hills within a gap of time just because you came a little earlier, can you drive me out of the Hills? I am carrying out the order of my Acharya. It is for you to decide whether you will have the garland of a flower brought by me for your service I am leaving the garland here itself. 'To me, Madhurakavi is an example. As you know, Madhurakavi knew of no other God than his Acharya Nammalwar. I recite his Kanninum Sirutambu I am his Dasa" So saying, Ananthalvan left the garland at the Garbhagriha and was about to depart from the shrine. Lord Srinivasa was moved, and holding Ananthalvan by the hand and adorning Himself with the garland. Pacified him and explained that. He was only testing his Acharya Bhakti and his dedication to service. He granted him the Purusartha which even Brahma and Rudhra could not attain. Prostating before the Lord and thinking himself to be the head of the blessed persons. Ananthalvan told him that nothing could please him more than the dedicated service at His feet and prayed that the service should continue forever. Having been captivated by his vairagya, The Lord assured him that for one like Ananthalvan who had surrendered before Sri Ramanuja, the Moksha Loka was always at hand. His disciples and his descendants and even those remotely connected to Ananthalvan would be covered by His Grace, added the Lord. After this episode, Ananthalvan's followers among the Vaishnavite clan increased. Those who had gone to the other Acharya wanted to have Ananthalvan's blessings. Ananthalvan realized that the Lord had blessed him and his descendants and followers only because of his Acharya Bhakti which itself was an emulation of the Acharya that his descendants and followers should henceforth be known as Madhurakavidasa.

From this incident and from the words of Sri Ananthalvan, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Avyahatamahad-vartmanah – One who is the ultimate means to obtain liberation from material entanglement."

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Holy Name 107: Yatirajah

Mantra: Om Yatirajaya Namah

Meaning – One who is King of all the ascetics (Sannyasis)

Pastime – After taking Initiation from Mahapurna at Madhurantakam, Sri Ramanuja returned to Kanchipuram along with his guru and his wife.

Kanchipurna came to know about Mahapurna's arrival and rushed to Ramanuja's house to see him. Mahapurna initiated Ramanuja's wife Rakshakambal after he requested him to do so. Both Ramanuja and his wife ate the remnants of the food that was served to their guru as prasadam that night and went to bed.

Ramanuja partitioned his house and requested his guru Mahapurna to stay along with his wife in one portion and started to take care of their needs. Ramanuja started to consider himself to be very fortunate as one is sure to be liberated after initiation. However, Ramanuja's wife Rakshakambal, who was ignorant of the importance of getting initiated into the Vaishnava fold, was indifferent. She continued to pursue the ritualistic way of life and continued to flaunt the superiority of her caste. Ramanuja started to learn the Divya-prabandhams by sitting near the feet of his spiritual master, Mahapurna.

Ramanuja happily spent six months learning the works of the Alwars and the meaning of the hymns compiled by them. One day Ramanuja and Mahapurna went out for different reasons. Ramanuja's wife started to prepare breakfast after finishing her bath. As there was no drinking water in the house, Rakshakambal went to fetch water from a nearby well. Incidentally, Mahapurna's wife too had come to the same well to take water for cooking. Both Mahapurna's wife and Rakshakambal started to draw water from the well at the same time from two different ropes.

As Mahapurna's wife was drawing the water faster, some drops of water from her pitcher fell into the pitcher of Rakshakambal. Rakshakambal became furious and said, "Have you lost your senses? Just because you are the guru's wife can you do whatever you want? How can you forget that my father's caste is higher than yours? I have to draw water once again as some water from your pitcher fell into mine. Having married my husband, who is ignorant about the caste hierarchy, I too have lost my respect."

Rakshakambal emptied her pitcher and washed it once again before drawing water from the well. Mahapurna's wife was shocked at Rakshakambal's outbursts and she went home without uttering a word. Mahapurna returned home and was shocked to find his wife crying. When Mahapurna repeatedly questioned the cause of her grief, she narrated everything to him. Mahapurna did not speak a word against Rakshakambal though he was hurt. After thinking for a while, Mahapurna said, "Whatever happens is for our good. It has been very long since we went to have the darshan of Lord Ranganatha. I think we should go back to Sri Rangam without any delay."

Mahapurna's wife agreed with him and both of them set out to Sri Rangam without even informing Ramanuja about it. By then, Ramanuja had memorized 100 hymns compiled by Bhuta-Alwar, 100 hymns compiled by Poigai-Alwar, 100 compiled by Pey-Alwar, 473 hymns of Periya-Alwar, 143 hymns of Goda, 145 hymns compiled by Kulashekara-Alwar, 216 hymns compiled by Thirumazhisai-Alwar, 55 hymns compiled by Thondaradipodi-Alwar, 10 hymns compiled by

Thirupani-Alwar, 11 hymns of Madhurakavi-Alwar, 1,360 hymns compiled by Thirumangai-Alwar and 1,296 hymns compiled by Nammalwar and learned their meanings from his spiritual master. As Ramanuja had just finished learning Thiruvaymozhi of Nammalwar he decided to worship his spiritual master and offer him some Dakshina as a token of gratitude for teaching him the works of the Alwars.

After buying sixteen articles that are required for worship, Ramanuja went to Mahapurna's quarters to thank him for teaching him the intricacies of Divyprabandham and to worship him. Ramanuja was shocked as he could not find Mahapurna or his wife in their quarters. Ramanuja returned home and inquired from his wife about Mahapurna.

Rakshakambal said, "When I was drawing water from the well some water from your guru's wife's pitcher fell into our pitcher and I asked her if she had forgotten the caste hierarchy. Though I did not utter any harsh words your guru and his wife became angry and left for Sri Rangam immediately. People say that a sadhu should control his anger and what sort of sadhu is your guru? He gets angry at small things and does not know how to control his anger."

Rakshakambal's words fell like thunderbolts on Ramanuja's ears and he could not control his fury. Ramanuja angrily said, "You evil woman, what right have you got to speak about my guru like that? How can you even think of a great Vaishnava like that? It is a sin to see your face. Get out of my sight."

Ramanuja became very sad and rushed out of his house. Ramanuja decided to utilize the articles that he had brought to worship his guru, to worship Lord Varadaraja and went to the temple.

Immediately after Ramanuja left for the Varadaraja's temple, an emaciated Brahmana came to his house and begged for some alms. Rakshakambal, who was enraged at her husband's outbursts, shouted at the Brahmana and chased him out of the house. On his way back, Ramanuja met the Brahmana and, in the process of inquiring about his well-being, Ramanuja asked the Brahmana if he had his food. The Brahmana told Ramanuja that Rakshakambal shouted at him and chased him away when he went to his house to seek alms. Ramanuja became very sad as feeding the poor is considered a sacred duty in the Vaishnava tradition.

Just a few days before this incident, a Shudra had come to give an oil massage to Ramanuja and Ramanuja asked his wife to serve him some food. Rakshakambal told Ramanuja that there was no food in the house as she had yet to cook and went to take a bath. Ramanuja became suspicious and went into the kitchen to see if Rakshakambal's words were true. Ramanuja was surprised to find one full bowl of cooked rice and gave it to the Shudra. Ramanuja started remembering all the wrongs committed by his wife. Ramanuja was unable to digest

Rakshakambal’s conduct with his guru Mahapurna’s wife and he was also reminded of Rakshakambal treating Kanchipurna as a Shudra.

Ramanuja immediately wrote a letter as if it were written by Rakshakambal’s father and addressed it to himself. The letter read, “Son, we have found a suitable match for Rakshakambal’s sister and we are in the process of getting her married. Your mother-in-law cannot bear the burden of making the preparations for the marriage. Therefore, please come to help me with the marriage preparations at the earliest. If you have some work to attend to, please send Rakshakambal immediately, and please come as soon as you finish your work.”

Ramanuja handed over the letter to the Brahmana and asked him to go back to his house and tell Rakshakambal that her father had sent him a letter. Ramanuja also requested the Brahmana to take Rakshakambal to her father’s house as she would get ready to accompany him after seeing the letter. The Brahmana went to Rakshakambal with the letter and told her that her father had sent him the letter and handed it over to her. Rakshakambal was overjoyed to see the letter from her father and treated the Brahmana with great respect and served him some good food. After some time, Ramanuja returned home and Rakshakambal, who had started making preparations to go to her father’s house, said, “My father has sent a letter to you, my sister is getting married and he has invited us to the wedding.”

Ramanuja read the letter and asked Rakshakambal to go to her father’s house along with the Brahmana and that he would join her in her father’s house as soon as he finished his work. After sending Rakshakambal to her father’s house Ramanuja went towards Lord Varadaraja’s temple. Ramanuja prostrated before Lord Varadaraja and said, “My Lord today I have completely become yours, please accept me.”

Ramanuja immediately procured some saffron robes and three bamboo staffs, another version says that Lord Varadaraja himself provided these articles to Sri Ramanuja because Lord Varadaraja is the provider of Sannyasa to Sri Ramanuja. He tied them together to make a Tridanda, which symbolically denotes that he accepts the presence of three realities i.e. Supreme Lord, the individual soul, and the material world. Ramanuja touched the saffron robes and the Tridanda to the Lotus feet of Lord Varadaraja and went to the tank that is situated near the temple taking them along with him. Ramanuja lit the sacrificial fire, took a bath in the tank, discarded the white robes that he was wearing, and wore the saffron robes. Thus, Ramanuja accepted the renounced order of life to focus on serving the Lord and society. Kanchipurna came to the spot as soon as he came to know about Ramanuja’s resolve to take up sannyasa and addressed him as Yatiraja, the king of ascetics or recluses. Since then Ramanuja has been fondly called Yatiraja, another version is Lord Varadaraja himself gave Ramanuja the title, Yatiraja since it is tradition to give the name to a receiver of Sannyasa by the provider of Sannyasa, So the provider of Sannyasa, Lord Varadaraja named Sri

Ramanuja as Yatiraja (One who is the king of the ascetics). Sri Ramanuja was so devoted to Vaishnavism that he did not want to accept the renounced order of life from his guru, Yadava Prakasha, who was also a Sannyasi from the Mayavada school of thought. Therefore, he directly took Sannyasa from Lord Varadaraja as there were no qualified Sannyasis to initiate him into the renounced order of life.

From this incident, we can understand Sri Ramanuja is "Yatirajah – One who is King of all the ascetics (Sannyasis)."

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Holy Name 108: Jagad-guruh

Mantra: Om Jagad-gurave Namah

Meaning – One who is the spiritual master of the entire universe

Pastime – Madhurakavi-Azhwar, who believed in Charma-nishta, which means considering devotion to one's spiritual master as the means for liberation, also followed Nammazhwar very soon. Madhurakavi-Azhwar has compiled just eleven stanzas glorifying his spiritual master in his lifetime and his work is called Kaninsiruthambu.

Madhurakavi Azhwar started to cry when Nammazhwar decided to quit his material body and Nammazhwar asked him the reason for his grief. Madhurakavi Azhwar, who was very devoted to Nammazhwar, said that it would be impossible for him to live without Nammazhwar. Nammazhwar asked him to shed all his worries as he would continue to live with him in his Deity form. Nammazhwar also told Madhurakavi Azhwar that he would get his Deity if he boiled some water from the adjacent Thamarabarani river in a certain method. After Nammazhwar disappeared from this planet, Madhurakavi Azhwar devotedly brought some water from the Thamarabarani River and started to boil it. After boiling the water for some time, a Deity of Ramanuja emerged from the water and it seemed to prophesize the impending incarnation of Ramanuja, which is known as Bhavishya Acharya or the Acharya for the future generations. This incident occurred at the beginning of Kali-yuga. About Sri Ramanuja, Sri Nammazhwar composed a verse of glorification (Tiruvaymoli (5.2.1), a section of the Divya Prabandha),

poliga poliga poliga! poyitru valluyir ccapam
naliyum naragamum nainda namanukkingu yadonrum illai
kaliyum kedum kandu kolmin kadalvannan budangal manmel
maliya ppugundisai padi adi ulidara kkandom

Translation: Victory! Victory! Victory! I behold something wonderful: all the inauspiciousness of the living entities is destroyed, no one is going to hell, Yamaraja has no more work, and the effects of Kaliyuga ceased to exist. This is

because all over the world an increasing number of Lord Vishnu's devotees sing his names while dancing and playing musical instruments.

In the olden days, people from other religions, scheduled castes and scheduled tribe communities were treated as untouchables and were supposed to stay away from the dwellings of the people of higher castes. They were supposed to subsist on scavenging and doing other odd jobs set aside for them by the higher castes. They were not even allowed to enter the Mada streets (the roads around the temples) and were allowed to see the utsava deities when they were brought out of the temples from a distance. For the first time in history, Sri Ramanuja allowed the people of these communities to enter Lord Thirunarayana's temple in Yadavadri, the present Melkote. Sri Ramanuja called them Thirukulathar, which means the people from Mother Lakshmi's community and introduced various reforms to uplift them. Following the footsteps of Natha Muni and Yamunacharya, Ramanuja initiated aspiring devotees from these communities into Vaishnavism at Melkote. Natha Muni had disciples from different communities and Yamunacharya had initiated Maruneeru Nambi into Vaishnavism even though he was born in a Panchama Varna. Similarly, Sri Ramanuja liberated several living entities from all walks of life during his lifetime and continued to do the same, threw his institution. Following in the footsteps of Sri Ramanuja, Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON (International Society of Krishna Consciousness), travelled across the world and liberated all the fallen condition souls from material existence and continues to do the same.

From this incident, we can understand that Sri Ramanuja is "Jagad-guruh – One who is the spiritual master of the entire universe," being the spiritual master of the universe, he is never restricted to a particular caste, sect and creed of people. But, he is the spiritual master of the entire universe, being the incarnation of Adisesha, he is the original spiritual master of all living entities in the universe and all other authorized spiritual masters (Gurus) are his representatives.

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□ iti ramanujastottara-satanamavalih samapta □